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ROMANTIC AND  
HISTORIC FLORIDA







PALM TREES AND LOTUS, IN THE JUNGLE GARDENS, VERO BEACH

# ROMANTIC AND HISTORIC FLORIDA

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*By*

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*Romantic and Historic Maine. West Indies of Today, Jamaica of Today. Cuba of Today. Panama of Today. Barton's Mills. The Ocean and Its Mysteries. Smugglers and Smuggling. Islands. An American Crusoe. The American Indian. Lost Treasures. Etc., etc.*



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A. HYATT VERRILL

Key West, Florida  
November, 1934





## INTRODUCTION

IT IS A rather strange and noteworthy fact that of all our states whose shores are washed by the Atlantic, the two which mark the northern and southern extremities of our eastern coast should possess the most romantic histories. Although doughty deeds, great adventures, war and conquest, with romance a-plenty, marked the history of all of our eastern states, yet only in Maine and Florida do we find such a wealth of romance, high adventure, fascinating legend, and picturesque quixotic characters as illuminate the pasts of these two states. Across the pages of their histories passes a procession of discoverers and conquerors—of Spanish cavaliers and grandees, tonsured friars and soldiers of fortune, villains and heroes, men of incredible daring and men of fiendish cruelty; dreamers who sought for a Utopia of peace and sanctity in the New World and men who were lured on, who faced anything, who murdered and destroyed in a selfish lust for gold.

In a broad way the histories of the two widely separated states are not very dissimilar, and this is not so very strange, nor is it strange that the two should have histories richer in romance than their sister states along our seaboard. Both Maine and Florida were “discovered” and settled by Europeans long before the territory between was other than an unknown wilderness. Both were for long the theaters of a struggle for suprem-

acy between Spanish, French and English, between Protestants and Catholics; and the "discovery," the conquest and the settlement of both were the direct results of credulous adventurers seeking visionary will-o'-the-wisps—fantastic legends: in the one case the marvelous "City of Norumberga" with its jewel-encrusted walls and houses of gold; in the other the even more fantastic "Fountain of Youth."

Of such stuff is Romance made, and while those of us who are of New England stock may look with reverence upon Plymouth Rock, or find interest in old houses, landmarks and relics of the Pilgrim Fathers and their successors, there was little of romance in the lives and deeds of the Puritans, little of the glamour, the pageantry, the quixotic deeds that ever go hand in hand with the Latin on his conquests. Even in Virginia, where such romantically inclined and picturesque characters as Captain John Smith and Lord Somers played most important parts in making history, there was comparatively little romance, aside from the Pocahontas episode; and, while deeds of valor and heroism, tales of suffering and appalling tragedy in plenty and to spare punctuate the histories of all our eastern states in the making, while Indian wars and massacres, bloody battles and the struggle for independence provide a colorful background and historic sites in abundance, yet only in Maine and in Florida do we find man's inhumanity to man or his struggle for personal and religious freedom so highly colored with romance and chivalry and pageantry that we lose sight of the bigotry, the selfishness, the politics and the sordid factors of those turbu-

lent days when Don and Frenchman, Britain and naked savage drenched our soil with one another's blood.

While Maine is redolent with romantic history and possesses a multitude of fascinating and little-known features and unusual incidents, yet it does not equal Florida in this respect. For Florida was the scene of one of the most romantic quests of all time; across the stage of its history strode some of the most picaresque and romantic figures of the world's most romantic and picaresque race. And its tropical climate, its trackless morasses, its Everglades and its exotic vegetation, its strange and mysterious aborigines lent a color, a fascination and a setting that were impossible in the north. Yet today it would be safe, I think, to assert that not twenty persons in a thousand who visit Florida are fully cognizant of the romantic features of this peninsular state. They may visit historic spots, national monuments, Indian reservations; they may have a more or less vague idea of the more important events in Florida's past—memories of what they learned in their schooldays—but the "human" side of Florida's history, the unusual, romantic, often almost legendary events, the associations of the past with the present, even the interest of out-of-the-way spots are known only to comparatively few.

Of course there are many—thousands—who visit Florida and care not a jot for romance, history or legend, who regard Florida only as a winter playground, whose entire interests are centered on bathing beaches, golf links, cabarets, palatial hotels, race tracks, social events, fishing or similar forms of recreation or whose days and nights are made up entirely of "whoopee." Speeding

over Florida's perfectly surfaced motor highways, thousands flash past villages and towns, through Everglades and farmlands, racing blindly across country where men of many nations have fought and fell, where mail-clad Spaniards have struggled through morasses in their quest for perpetual youth, where Indians have fought bitterly against the white aggressors, where men and women have been ruthlessly massacred because of their religion. It is not for this type of Florida visitor that this book has been written, but for those who, whether touring or residing in the state, wish to know more of Florida's allure than can be found in the ordinary guide book or hotel leaflets; who will find an added interest and attraction in the spots they visit if they are aware of the romance and the history of cities and old forts, of Indian mounds and unobtrusive villages; who are alive to the fascination of legend and tradition; who delight in the unusual and little known, and who find romance and delight in the deeds of Spanish conquerors, swash-buckling pirates, merciless warriors and fantastic adventurers, even in these matter-of-fact, unromantic times.

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ROMANTIC AND  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE PATRIARCH OF THE UNION

Did Columbus discover Florida? Ponce de León and the Fountain of Youth. De Soto and his cavaliers. Strange tales. The first settlement.

FLORIDA! The very name suggests romance and allure. The allure of perpetual summer, of a wealth of flowers, of endless white beaches and tepid blue sea, of palms and oranges, of sunshine and balmy breezes. The romance of the mythical Fountain of Youth and Ponce de León, who dreamed of staying the hand of time and remaining ever young by finding that legendary spring and bathing in its miraculous waters.

Every school child knows of Ponce de León and the Fountain of Youth—they are almost synonymous with the state's name—yet, as a matter of fact, Ponce de León played a comparatively small part in the making of Florida's history while the Fountain of Youth was supposed to be in the Bahamas and not in Florida, and lack of skill in navigation and contrary winds rather than desire or design resulted in De León "discovering" the Land of Flowers.

For that matter, from a strictly historical viewpoint he should not be credited with the "discovery," for Florida is shown clearly on several maps made prior to the date of his arrival, while many authorities claim that what is now Florida was actually discovered by

no less a personage than Christopher Columbus himself. In fact, Señor Ulloa, the Peruvian historian, appears to have proved conclusively by documentary and other evidence that Columbus had already visited America prior to his famous voyage of 1492, and that several years before he sought the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella with his proposition he actually had crossed the Atlantic and had set foot on the shores of the western hemisphere at a spot now included in the State of Florida.

Without entering into a lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of the question, it is interesting to note that Señor Ulloa bases his claims quite largely upon the original *Capitulacion* or Cedula granted to Columbus by Ferdinand and Isabella. On this document, which was the royal commission or permit given Columbus by the Crown of Spain, the original wording read that it was granted to Cristobal Colon, "who *has* discovered a New World." Later, however, the form of the verb was changed to read "who *will* discover a New World." According to Señor Ulloa this alteration was made in order to give full honors for any discoveries to the monarchs, whereas, had the original form of the verb been retained, Columbus would have received the credit and the Crown of Spain would have been regarded merely as having financed the expedition.

Photographs of the original document appear to bear out Señor Ulloa's statements, for the erasure and substitution are clearly visible. Moreover, the course followed by Columbus, the fact that he knew just when land might be expected to appear, and his implicit con-

fidence that he would reach land, all hint of previous knowledge. And the fact that the land he *was* to discover, or *had* discovered, was referred to as a "New World" proves conclusively that even before Columbus set sail in 1492 he and the Spanish monarchs were aware that it was not Asia or Cipango (Japan) that



was on the western side of the Atlantic, but an unknown territory. This could scarcely have been known had not Columbus or some other voyager already visited America. Be that as it may, and regardless of whether or not Columbus was the first European to set foot on Florida's shores, it is certain that the peninsula had been "discovered" and partially explored by some one at least a decade before Ponce de León's arrival, for on the Alberto Cantino map of 1502, and also



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on the Waldesmuller map of 1508, Florida is shown fairly accurately—although entirely out of place in its relation to Cuba and Yucatan.

But quite irrespective of who actually discovered what is now Florida, or when it was discovered, the fact remains that Florida is the patriarch of the Union, the oldest state in the United States in point of discovery and settlement; and if Columbus actually landed on its shores, the incident merely makes Florida some thirty-odd years older than is generally assumed.

Neither does it detract from Ponce de León's fame and credit and the romance of his visit; for, regardless of who first discovered Florida, the credulous seeker of the Fountain of Youth was the first to publicize Florida and make it known to the world at large. And it is the man who first "broadcasts" a find or patents an invention or commercializes an idea who is invariably regarded as the rightful claimant to any honors or emoluments which may result therefrom.

Unfortunately, in the days when adventurous Spanish cavaliers were chasing elusive Fountains of Youth and Golden Cities and Gilded Men and similar phantasies (which we would scoff at as the wildest flights of imagination, but which the old Dons regarded as credible and reasonable) press agents and publicity managers were not in vogue, so there are no records to tell us how long Ponce de León remained in Florida, what he did there or his impressions of the country. And as he could find no waters possessing miraculous powers of rejuvenation—but only savage Indians who did not

even possess gold to be filched by the Spaniards—Ponce de León no doubt decided that the new land was of no value or importance.

He was not even aware that it was a portion of a continent but deemed it an island, one of the Bahamas; for, while we always associate the Fountain of Youth with Florida (St. Augustine actually claims that the spring is within its borders), yet the Indian legend which lured Ponce de León on his quest placed the fountain on one of the Bahama Islands, either Bimini or Grand Bahama. And when De León set sail from San Juan, Puerto Rico, on March 3, 1513, present calendrical reckoning, or March 3, 1512, according to the calendar then in use, he steered his course for the northwestern Bahamas. But his ships were poor sailers at the best, the countless reefs and shoals and the tortuous channels of the Bahamas were uncharted and dangerous, tides and winds were unfavorable, and navigation was a most uncertain and inaccurate science.

So, instead of sighting Bimini or Grand Bahama or even New Providence, Andros or Abaco, as expected, Ponce de León's pilots raised an unknown land before the bluff bows of their wallowing ships. The pilots as well as De León were apparently woefully ignorant of previous voyagers' discoveries and the maps which had been published for at least ten years, so they quite naturally assumed that the flat shores they were approaching were those of a Bahaman island.

As is known to every school child, Ponce de León reached Florida on Easter Sunday, March 27, 1513

(present reckoning), and named the supposed island in honor of the day—the “Pascua Florida” of the Spaniards.

Then, having satisfied himself that the Fountain of Youth bubbled from the earth elsewhere, he sailed southward, passed Cape Canaveral, which he named Cabo de Corientes (Cape of the Currents), on account of the strong opposing tides he encountered, and coasted along the Florida Keys to Key West which he christened Cayo de Huesos (Key of the Bones) because of quantities of human bones he found there. It would be interesting to know whose mortal remains were bleaching in the sun on the little isle. Were they the bones of some unfortunate shipwrecked mariners from Europe, some unknown and missing voyagers who had “discovered” Florida only to perish on this outflung bit of its territory; or were they merely the débris left by cannibals after an anthropophagous feast? *Quien sabe?* as the Spaniards say, and as, doubtless, Ponce de León and his men muttered while they shrugged their armor-clad shoulders and sailed away to the westward.

Having reached the Dry Tortugas, which he so named because of the immense numbers of giant sea turtles (tortugas) which he found on these sea-girt islets, and which were most welcome additions to the ships’ larders, Ponce de León steered toward the east and in due course sighted the Florida mainland somewhere near Cape Sable, and probably near the Ten Thousand Islands, at the present Ponce de León Bay.

By this time he must have become disabused of the idea that Florida was a Bahaman island, and as he was

now convinced that the Fountain of Youth was not in the new-found land, and as he was met with a most unpleasantly warm reception on the part of the Florida Indians, he hove up anchors and sailed for Puerto Rico where he arrived safely on September 21, 1513, after having been absent for about seven months.

Although he had made geographical discoveries destined to be of vast importance, and had charted hitherto unknown seas, yet Ponce de León regarded his long voyage as a dismal failure. He had set forth for the dual purpose of securing a cargo of Indian slaves from the Bahamas and of locating the spring of eternal youth, and he had accomplished neither the one mission nor the other. He had not even sighted the Bahamas—although one of his captains, Juan Pere de Ortuibia, delayed by wind and currents, had reached Bimini; the only Indians he had met were savage, war-like fighters who had inherent objections to being enslaved; and the Fountain of Youth was as remote as ever.

Just why the romantically inclined grandee should have been so keen on finding the fabulous font is something of a puzzle, for he was still in the very prime of life, only fifty-three years of age, and far from being the white-bearded, senile man that popular imagination and tradition have pictured him. And in his day men of fifty-three were not regarded as old, nor were they, as a rule, greatly concerned with the march of time and the problems of advancing age. Rather, they were hale and hearty, seasoned campaigners, as ready to lay siege to a maiden's heart as to an enemy's fortress, and look-

ing upon youth as an undesirable, callow and rather embryonic stage of existence.

But Ponce de León was a rather gallant cavalier and, moreover, he was most deeply in love with his wife, his "beloved Dolores," so perchance his overwhelming desire to attain perpetual youth was as much for the Señora's happiness as for his own.

Be that as it may, he appears to have abandoned all hope of finding and bathing in the miraculous fountain, for his second voyage to Florida, on which he embarked in 1521, was actuated by more sordid and less romantic objectives than the acquisition of perpetual youth. Cortez had conquered and looted the Aztecs in Mexico, and vast treasures were being shipped from Mexico to Spain. If there were treasures to be won in Mexico why should there not be equal riches to be found among unknown races in the interior of Florida? Ponce de León asked himself. Who could say what great cities, what strange civilizations, what incredible stores of precious metals might not lie beyond the flat shores, the mangrove swamps and the dense jungles of the new land he had visited? Had Cortez merely coasted along the Mexican shores, had he retreated from the first attack by hostile natives, the treasures of the Aztecs would never have been suspected.

Ponce de León reproached himself bitterly for not having penetrated more deeply into the interior of Florida as, seated in the Casa Blanca, he gazed across the sparkling sea and saw the purple and orange-sailed galleons come lumbering into San Juan's harbor deep-laden with treasure from the ravished Aztecs, which was

being transported to Spain. But there was still time to do what he had failed to do on his voyage of eight years earlier. He would again set sail for Florida; he would march inland, conquer the aborigines, help himself to their treasures and find unbounded riches, even if he could not locate the Fountain of Youth. So, investing all his remaining wealth in the new venture, he equipped two ships. Then, in gay spirits, he bade farewell to his beloved Dolores, and, sailing out of San Juan's harbor, steered for the distant Florida coast.

History fails to record just where he first landed on the peninsula, on this voyage; but it makes little difference, for he was savagely attacked and driven off by the Indians who—judging from their actions—must have had some experience with white men prior to his appearance on the scene. Again and again he attempted to land and march into the interior, but everywhere arrows and blowgun darts rained in deadly showers upon the Spaniards; and, in spite of the fact that Ponce de León was clad in full armor, an Indian arrow found its mark and the romantically inclined knight was carried, badly wounded, to his ship.

All sail was made for Cuba where the dying cavalier was carried ashore. He lived only long enough to make his will and to send a final message of love to his wife. His body was carried in his flagship to San Juan where it was placed tenderly in a tomb within the castle which had been his home. Later the remains were removed to the Dominican Church and were deposited under the High Altar where they remained until 1863 when, after more than three centuries, the body of the "dis-

coverer" of Florida was disinterred and cast aside like so much rubbish. Not until the American occupation of Puerto Rico were the mortal remains of the famous grandee placed beneath the monument where they now lie. Strange to relate, the body is in a most remarkable state of preservation, with the features still recognizable, and still clad in the suit of mail which failed to turn aside a primitive Indian arrow. Although Ponce de León failed most dismally in his search for eternal youth, as well as in his search for riches, yet he paved the way for riches beyond his wildest dreams, he won eternal fame, and his name will ever live on as one of the most noted and honored of the Spanish discoverers.

Following in the wake of Ponce de León came Juan Diego Miruelo who landed at the spot where Pensacola now stands. He was the first "discoverer" of this fine harbor, but by no means the last, for no less than four different voyagers claimed to have discovered Pensacola during the early part of the sixteenth century, while the flags of more nations have flown above Pensacola than over any other city in Florida. The next important personage to visit Florida was Grijalva who, in 1518, raided the Bahamas and eastern Florida on a slaving expedition. The following year Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda sailed from Cuba, rounded Cape Sable, and skirting the western coast of Florida, cruised to Mexico where he found the forces of Cortez at Vera Cruz. On his return voyage he discovered and entered the Mississippi which he named Rio de Santo Espiritu. For six weeks he sailed on the bosom of the Father of Waters, where he was received by the Indians as a demigod, and upon

reaching Cuba he prepared a map of his discoveries which was dated 1519. Hence Pineda and not De Soto should be given credit for discovering the Mississippi fully twenty years before De Soto's ill-starred expedition.

In 1523 Florida first attracted serious attention in the eyes of the Spaniards who reasoned that the only possible explanation of the Indians' hostility must be that they possessed vast treasures which they sought to protect. At this time the entire coast from Mexico to Labrador was known as Florida, and one of the Spanish settlements, that of Lucas Velasquez de Ayllon, was very near the spot where, eighty-one years later, Captain John Smith founded Jamestown. But the idea of vast riches being somewhere in the interior of Florida centered largely around the more southerly portion of the area, possibly because all the stupendous treasures so far found in the New World had been in tropical or semi-tropical lands, and partly, no doubt, because the voyagers who had been in touch with the Indians farther north had found no traces of gold among them. Moreover, Pineda's accounts of the marvels he had seen—most of which were pure fiction—were swallowed hook, line and sinker by the credulous, avaricious Spaniards, among whom was Pamfilo de Navarez. With two ships, four hundred men and eighty horses—a far larger force than the "army" of Pizarro which conquered Peru—Navarez set sail; but the Indians of Florida were more warlike than the Peruvians, and only four men of the four hundred who landed near the present site of Tampa ever returned alive.

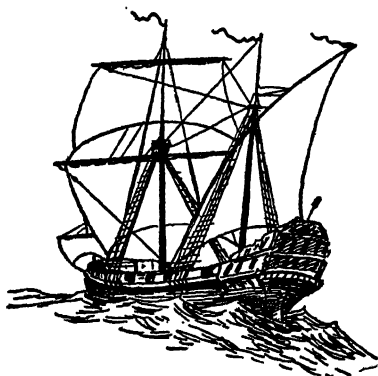


Of these the most remarkable was Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, a man of almost superhuman courage and endurance and indomitable will power, who possessed sound and keen judgment. In all probability had he been in command of the expedition the results would have been very different. But in that case we should not have had the fascinating, almost incredible story of Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca's experiences during the eight years that he and his three comrades wandered through jungles and forests, across burning waterless deserts, across impenetrable swamps until they at last reached the Gulf of California—the first white men to cross the American Continent. And had Nuñez not survived we would have no account of what transpired with the ill-fated army of Pamfilo de Navarez, nor would the fate of his three hundred and ninety-six men be known.

Pamfilo's first landing, as I have said, was near Tampa, but here the expedition found great difficulty in penetrating inland, owing to the many large rivers and streams, and it was not until they reached the spot where Apalachicola now stands that their adventures really began.

Leaving their ships at anchor and unwisely carrying all their supplies and provisions with them, the four hundred marched into the forest, heading northwest, following winding Indian trails, led onward by the tales of the Indians who, anxious to be rid of the unwelcome white men, ever told them of golden cities and vast treasures just beyond. Very soon the provisions were exhausted and, as the Indians' crops had failed and the

aborigines were on the verge of starvation themselves, the foot-weary, haggard-eyed Spaniards were forced to subsist upon their horses, their leather wallets and even their boots. At last they gave up in despair and the one hundred surviving members of the expedition turned back and retraced their steps to the coast, only to find that their ships had sailed for Cuba, the crews having abandoned all hopes of their comrades returning. Faced



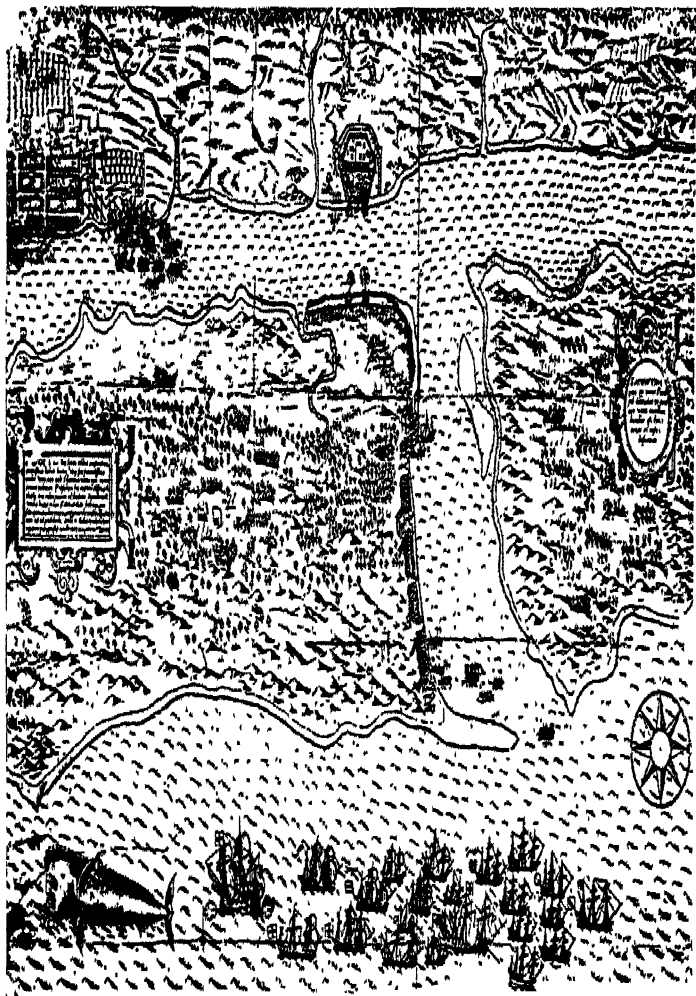
with such an extremity, the men, with the few rude tools they possessed and with only one man who had any knowledge of carpentry, hewed planks and timbers from the forest trees, twisted the manes and tails of their slaughtered horses into ropes, fashioned spikes and fittings from bits, stirrups and weapons, and by some incredible means actually constructed five boats in which, with their shirts as sails, they embarked and headed westward.

Near Pensacola they were beset by a terrific storm which capsized two of the crazy craft, and Pamfilo and

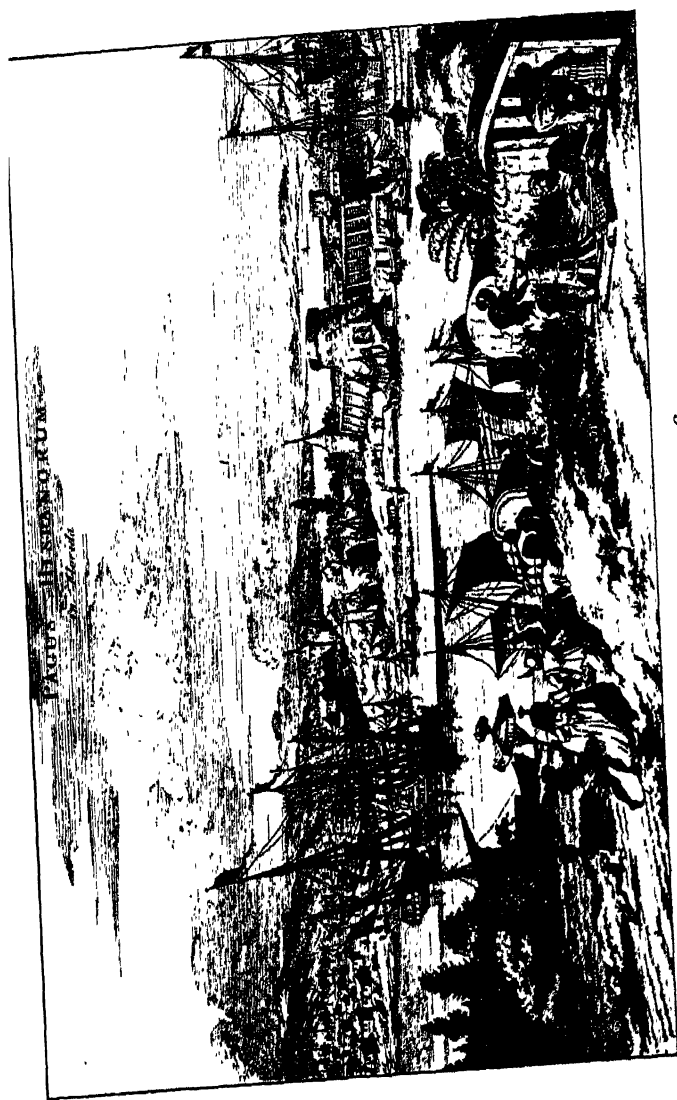
several others were drowned. Half starved, racked with fever, exhausted by their Herculean labors, and frequently attacked by the Indians, the members of the expedition succumbed one by one until only Alvar Núñez, Estevan the Moor, and two other Spaniards were left alive. Realizing the impossibility of continuing in their battered unseaworthy craft, these four men set out afoot for Mexico. Soon reduced to nakedness, often captives of the Indians, subsisting as best they might, they toiled painfully westward, suffering unspeakable hardships until, eight years after they had landed in Florida, they reached their fellow Spaniards on the "Gulf of California."

Fascinating as is this tale of high adventure it has little bearing on Florida other than the fact that it was the Núñez story, published in 1537, which led Hernando de Soto to set forth on his famous expedition. De Soto, who had won distinction and a commission as Lieutenant General under Pizarro in Peru, and who had been commissioned Governor of Cuba, sailed from Havana in May, 1539, with nine ships, 570 men, 223 horses, 300 hogs, a quantity of other live stock and a number of bloodhounds. The expedition landed at Tampa Bay, where, with trumpets blaring, flags flying and the sun glinting on weapons and mail, De Soto's forces made a brave and colorful array. Eight days after coming to anchor the entire force had disembarked, and taking possession of the Indians' homes—the owners having fled in dismay—De Soto prepared to march into the wilderness.

The rest of the story of that fatal expedition is too



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE'S MAP OF ST. AUGUSTINE IN 1586



ST. AUGUSTINE IN 1673

well known to warrant repetition, but there was one item that is of intense interest in connection with Florida—the discovery of an Indian temple which, if we can credit the Spaniards' tale, throws an entirely new light on the aborigines of Florida. According to the accounts left to us, this temple or palace was over three hundred feet in length and one hundred and fifty feet in width, with a high-peaked, thatched roof studded with innumerable lustrous shells and draped inside with strands of marvelous pearls. The floor was of mica sand which glittered like diamond dust, and on either side were gigantic wooden images, twelve in all, those nearest the entrance being twelve feet in height, and each pair holding a different form of weapon. The first two held huge war clubs bound and ornamented with copper. The second pair grasped wooden swordlike clubs. The next pair held stout paddle-shaped clubs of wood. In the hands of the fourth pair were tomahawks with copper or flint blades. The fifth pair grasped bows and arrows. The last pair held spears tipped with copper. Hanging on the walls were mantles and robes of dyed and painted skins, feather capes and headdresses, and quivers and other articles ornamented with shell work, tassels and feathers. And everywhere were pearls in abundance, the Indian queen having a necklace of magnificent pearls so long that it encircled her neck thrice and hung to below her waist. As she refused to part with her priceless necklet, the Spaniards solved the problem of its acquisition by kidnaping her, pearls and all. What disposal was made of the queen, history does not relate, but the pearls which had adorned her dusky

neck eventually reached Spain where they were sold for immense prices.

The utter failure of De Soto's expedition, as far as finding gold and silver was concerned, convinced the Spanish Crown that Florida was a complete flop as a source of potential treasures, and the King commanded that no further expenses or efforts should be incurred by exploring the country. But as the French were casting covetous eyes on Florida with a view to using it as a refuge for the Huguenots, the Spanish government retained small garrisons at various points, and when Philip II ascended the Spanish throne he decided immediately to establish two strongly fortified cities in Florida, one on the east coast and one on the west.

To carry out his designs the King selected Don Tristan de Luna y Arrellano, and every precaution was taken to insure the success of the venture. Unfortunately, however, there was one most vital item overlooked: not a member of the expedition possessed any knowledge of husbandry. Had there been farmers as well as soldiers among the men, the whole history of Florida would have been altered.

The plans as drawn up called for two towns to be surveyed and laid out. The town on the Atlantic, to be located near the St. Johns River, was to be called Santa Elena; while the other was to be established near the mouth of the Mississippi. Each town was to contain 144 lots, 40 of these being reserved for a monastery, a church and a "King's house." In the center of each town there was to be a plaza large enough to accommodate the entire population if necessary. This was

perhaps the first land boom in Florida, and no doubt fortunes were made and lost by speculators just as they have been lost and made in similar schemes in more recent times.

When the expedition at last set forth from Vera Cruz, on June 11, 1559, it contained 500 soldiers, 250 horses and over a thousand servants, camp followers and hangers-on, in addition to women and children. In thirteen ships the "army" set sail, and after a voyage of thirty days the fleet dropped anchor in what is now Pensacola Bay. The Spaniards' landing was not opposed, no Indians being visible, and a fine site was selected for the proposed town on a bluff beside the bay. Glowing reports were sent back to Mexico, with requests to dispatch more troops, supplies, priests and colonists, and two scouting parties were sent out to explore the neighboring territory. Before these parties returned, with discouraging accounts of the interior, a hurricane swept over the bay, wrecking all but three of the smaller vessels and destroying practically all the supplies and provisions, while the little that had been taken ashore was ruined by the torrential rains. Many lives were lost when the ships went down with all on board, and the only hope of the remaining forces was to send one of the vessels to Mexico with a plea for succor. But the Viceroy in Mexico had little to spare; and, although calls for help were sent to all the neighboring Spanish colonies, weeks went by before there was any response. In the meantime De Luna's men foraged for food among the Indian villages until, half famished, and with the aborigines' supplies exhausted, De Luna, al-



most delirious with fever, ordered his surviving forces to move to the Alabama River where the Spaniards managed to subsist on acorns and leaves, until, when they had practically abandoned hope, two ships arrived with provisions. With spirits revived an expedition started inland with two priests, one hundred men and seven officers in search of Indian villages where a plentiful supply of maize was supposed to be hidden. But long before they reached the first large village the Spaniards had been driven to the extremities of eating their leather jerkins, their harness and even their shields.

Arriving at a fairly good-sized Indian village they bartered their clothes for food and, half naked and barefooted, wandered about, only to discover that the Indians had uprooted and destroyed their crops in order to starve out the Spaniards whose fellow countrymen under De Soto had given them ample cause for fear and hatred of all white men. Returning to De Luna's camp with lugubrious reports of what they had found, the survivors of the foraging party arrived to find that a mutiny had broken out and that it had been decided to move to Mobile Bay. There for a time ships brought meager supplies, until word was received from Spain ordering De Luna to cross Florida and establish the proposed city of Santa Elena in order to checkmate a French expedition already on the way to found a settlement.

But De Luna was broken in health. He was relieved of his command, and, in company with his few remaining followers, he returned to Mexico, a ruined, utterly

discouraged man.

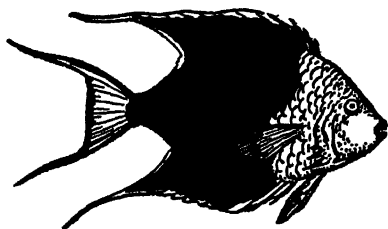
A year after De Luna's return to Mexico, Jean Ribault with his French Huguenots arrived off the coast of Florida, in two vessels, after a voyage of seventy-two days from Dieppe, the first transatlantic voyage from continent to continent that had ever been made. It was not far from Matanzas Inlet that Ribault and his followers sighted the Florida coast, and, christening the point of land French Cape, they sailed northward until they reached the mouth of a large river. As this was on the first day of May, the Frenchmen named the stream the River May, and although it was later renamed the St. Johns, and for a time was known as the San Mateo, the old French name is perpetuated in the town of Mayport at the mouth of the river. In contrast to the attitude of the Indians toward the Spaniards, the natives welcomed Ribault and his Frenchmen with kindness and hospitality. Falling on his knees, Ribault offered thanks to Heaven for the safe arrival in the new land and on the following day took possession in the name of King Charles IX.

A few days later Ribault and his men reëmbarked and sailed north to the St. Marys River near Fernandina, which he named the Seine. Here they remained for three weeks before again cruising northward until they reached Port Royal. At this point they pass out of the picture, as far as Florida is concerned, and in their place comes René de Laudonnière who arrived off the coast of Florida on Thursday, June 22, 1564.

Sighting a splendid inlet where great schools of porpoises were frolicking, Laudonnière steered into the

haven and christened it the River of Dolphins. A few years later it was renamed San Augustin by the Spaniards. But even if this Frenchman must be given the credit for being the first European to enter St. Augustine's harbor, he remained there but a short time before sailing on to the St. Johns which he explored for some distance from its mouth. Like Ribault he was received with open arms by the Indians, and satisfied that he had reached the promised land, he at once proceeded to establish a settlement and construct a fort near the river mouth. This fortification, which was called Fort Caroline, was unquestionably the first fort built in eastern Florida. It was the nucleus of the first settlement and antedated St. Augustine by a year.

But the one soon passed out of existence and left no traces to mark its exact location, while the other grew and prospered and developed into an important modern city, a city of peace and beauty and enchantment, although its foundations rest on blood-drenched soil; a city where the new rubs elbows with the old, and the solid masonry of the sixteenth century Spaniards still stands intact.



## CHAPTER II

### WHERE FLORIDA BEGAN

Along the Dixie Highway. The Florida Republics. The first free port. Fernandina and troublous times. Guerilla warfare. De Gourgues' vengeance. Jacksonville's vicissitudes. Mayport and Maypop. The Huguenots. Sir Francis Drake visits Florida. Menéndez strikes. The massacre of the Huguenots. Indian troubles. McGregor's kingdom. A pirates' nest. Yellow fever. Fire.

TRAVELING southward over the splendid Dixie Highway, one enters upon historic ground the moment the boundary of Florida is crossed; for here, back in 1810, the Republic of Florida was established—a real *bona-fide* Republic, with Colonel John McIntosh duly elected President, and with Colonel Ashley as Commander in Chief of the republic's "army." Just how this strange and little known state of affairs came about forms an interesting and romantic tale—a fitting introduction to Florida's romantic past.

War between England and the United States was looming on the horizon, and President Madison, feeling certain that with the outbreak of hostilities the British would seize Florida as a naval base, commissioned General Mathews and Colonel McKee of Georgia as emissaries to the Spanish Governor of Florida, their mission being to secure a temporary cession of northern Florida to the Union, with pledges of its return at

the close of the war. Feeling far from certain that the Spaniards would agree to the proposition, the President secretly instructed the two officers to take forcible possession of the territory in case the negotiations failed and the British attempted to land on Florida soil.

There is an old Spanish proverb to the effect that: "A secret between two is God's secret, but a secret between three is everybody's." So it proved in this case, and a large force of Georgia frontiersmen congregated on the northern shores of the St. Marys River, armed and equipped and fairly "rarin' to go." As they were acting independently and without any authority of our government, they formed a government of their own, declared northern Florida an independent republic, elected their president and the necessary officials, and snapped their fingers at the duly constituted authorities of both Spain and the United States. At first General Mathews took no official notice of the newborn republic, although fully aware of its existence and purpose; for he realized that, in the near future, the hard-fighting, daredevil Georgians might prove very handy allies, especially as matters were not progressing at all satisfactorily in his dealings with the Spanish officials.

In 1808 Fernandina had been declared a free port—the first free port in what is now the United States—and the Spaniards were far from particular as to the activities or ownership of the innumerable vessels that crowded the little port. There were ugly rumors afloat—rumors of pirates boldly entering the harbor to dispose of bloodstained loot from sunken ships, of smugglers and slavers winked at by the authorities. To be sure,

the importation of slaves had been forbidden, the law declaring that slavers were to be considered guilty of piracy, but the prohibition—like our own prohibition of recent date—only added incentive to the illegal traffickers in “black ivory” and enhanced their profits; and, as the officials were poorly paid and the slavers made it well worth their while to be blind at times, slaves continued to be bootlegged into Florida.

However, it was not the slaves or pirates’ booty that troubled General Mathews and Colonel McKee. Such matters concerned only the Spanish authorities; but they realized that, if pirates and slavers could safely enter Fernandina without fear of their identities or purposes becoming known, it would be an equally safe and simple matter for British privateers and sloop-of-war to enter the port. And as the Spanish Governor refused to “loan” this portion of his territory to the United States for the duration of the war, and Fernandina under existing conditions was a menace to our shipping, General Mathews decided to take advantage of the new republic and enlisted the services of the Georgians. With the republicans as a land force, and with nine American vessels that were in the harbor, Amelia Island and Fernandina were attacked and occupied. When the port and fortifications were in his possession, General Mathews demanded that the Spanish Commandant, Don Justo Lopez, should surrender—which he promptly did. It was agreed that Fernandina should remain a free port but that British vessels should be prevented from entering in case of war. With this matter settled, Colonel Ashley with three hundred

men marched southward for St. Augustine, and at Fort Moosa (about three miles from the city) he was joined by one hundred regulars.

Realizing that his small garrison could not hope to repel the invaders, the Spanish Commandant fitted out a small vessel, arming her with three cannon, and, accompanied by a couple of gunboats, sailed up the North River to a point where he could bombard Fort Moosa. As the Republicans had no artillery, and as the Spaniards' round shot were smashing holes in the old fort, the Americans retired to Four Mile Creek where they were joined by a force under William Craig.

It was while they were here that a deputation of Seminoles arrived and offered their services against the Spaniards. Unfortunately their aid was refused, for the refusal raised resentment in the breast of their chief who promptly led his band to St. Augustine and joined the Spaniards. As a result, a devastating guerilla warfare was carried on for more than a year, the Indians slaughtering scores of planters and destroying vast amounts of property.

In the meantime matters had gone badly indeed for the punitive expedition of the new Republic. Many of the men were ill with fever and it was decided to return to the St. Marys. On their march northward they were ambushed by a force of Spanish Negroes, led by a freed slave named Prince, and were massacred without mercy.

Fernandina, the city captured by the forces of the East Florida Republic, stands on historic ground. It was here that Ribault and his Frenchmen landed and christened the river the New Seine, and here they re-

mained for nearly a month. Near here, the first Jesuit martyr in North America, Fray P. Pedro Martínez, met death at the hands of the Indians. And it was here, at the mouth of the St. Marys River, that Dominique De Gourgues landed and wrought terrible revenge upon the Spaniards who had massacred the French Huguenots at Matanzas.

In addition to his national grievance against the Dons, De Gourgues held a private reason for vengeance, for he had been at one time condemned to slavery in a Spanish galley. As the French Government seemed disinclined to avenge the slaughter of its Florida subjects, De Gourgues decided to take matters in his own capable hands and wipe out his personal and his national scores at one and the same time. He realized that he had a dangerous and difficult task before him, for Menéndez, the Spanish Governor, had greatly strengthened his defenses at Fort Mateo (so named after its capture from the French who had named it Fort Caroline) and, in addition, he had built two other forts or batteries at the spots now known as Mayport Mills and Batten Island.

But De Gourgues was a resourceful, a clever and a far-sighted man—as well as a nobleman and wealthy—and he believed that, despite the Spaniards' boast that that not half of France could take the forts, he could succeed by guile where mere force of arms might fail. Securing a royal permit to go a-slaving on the coast of Africa, he outfitted and armed three ships, gathered about him some two hundred fellow adventurers and soldiers of fortune and sailed away, ostensibly for Guinea. But instead of steering southward he headed



into the west, a sea-going knight-errant with a crew of as reckless, dare-devilish a lot of men as ever trod the decks of a buccaneers' ship.

Putting in to the mouth of the St. Marys, he landed where Fernandina now stands and was welcomed by a horde of Indians who, aside from the friendship they had established with the French under Ribault and Laudonnière, were as vengeful toward the Spaniards as were De Gourgues and his followers, and were only too willing to enroll their warriors on the side of the French.

From where De Gourgues and his men had encamped, a labyrinth of creeks, bayous and streams formed an interior waterway to Batten Island and the St. Johns, an unknown maze to white men but an open road to the Indians. Embarking in canoes, poled and paddled by the Indians, the French with their scores of savage allies stole silently, in dead of night, along the black creeks toward the unsuspecting Spaniards. The attack was made at daybreak and was a complete surprise, the French and Indians reaching within two hundred feet of the forts before the alarm was raised. And then it was too late.

Before the garrison of over four hundred men could arm themselves, before a gunner could touch match to vent of cannon, the attackers were swarming over the walls and parapets. A gun roared twice but without doing damage, and ere the gunner could reload Chief Olatocara ran him through with a spear. There was no quarter given; in a few brief moments the fort was a shambles, and only fifteen Spaniards remained alive,

though far better for them had they fallen in the slaughter of their comrades.

During the attack the fort across the river had been hurling round shot at the enemy, but no sooner were the French in possession than they turned the captured guns on the other fort and, under cover of this barrage, Indians and Frenchmen crossed the stream only to have



the Spanish garrison flee in a panic at the approach of their foes. Many were shot down by the French, many fell to Indian darts and arrows, but a few reached the main fortress of San Mateo. Their case, even there, was hopeless. They were surrounded on all sides by French and Indians, and all were killed, except the commandant and a handful of his men who were made prisoners.

De Gourgues had wrought a swift and terrible vengeance, but he was not yet satisfied. He recalled the brutal action of Menéndez in hanging the Huguenots

whom he had taken prisoners under promise of safe conduct, and on whose dangling bodies had been pinned placards with the words "Not as Frenchmen but as Lutherans." Herding his captives under the very trees on which Menéndez had hanged the Huguenots, De Gourgues meted out the same fate to his prisoners, and then above their heads placed a tablet bearing the words: "Not as Spaniards nor as outcasts, but as traitors, thieves and murderers."

Aside from its historic associations, Fernandina is of interest as the Atlantic terminus of the proposed trans-Florida ship canal. Over and over again this canal has been urged; again and again it has appeared on the verge of being undertaken; only to be vetoed. Why this should be so is almost inexplicable. Such a canal, linking the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, would be a comparatively easy and not over costly engineering feat. It would save over two thousand miles of ocean travel between Atlantic and Gulf ports and ports in Central and South America and Mexico. It would shorten the journey from New York to the Panama Canal by at least two days, and, moreover, it would be a tremendous factor in building up and populating the interior of Florida with a corresponding increase in the agricultural and commercial development of the northern part of the state.

Of course, such a canal would transform Fernandina from a small and not very important port into a vast terminus with immense docks, warehouses and a multitude of shipping; and doubtless Jacksonville, St. Augustine and other Atlantic ports would suffer some com-

mercial and maritime losses thereby. But Fernandina is a far better and more logical entreport than Jacksonville, which is several miles up-river from the sea, whereas Fernandina is on a safe and convenient harbor. However, the chances are that the canal will not be dug for many years—if ever—and that Fernandina will long remain a small, sleepy, moribund little port off the main highway, almost unknown to the majority of visitors to Florida, while Jacksonville or “Jax” as the Floridians call it, will continue to thrive and grow and prosper as it has done in the past.

Although Jacksonville cannot boast of crumbling buildings and ancient forts dating back to the days of Spanish conquerors and mail-clad men-at-arms, yet the busy, bustling, thoroughly modern city beside the St. Johns River is a historic spot, and the St. Johns River, or the May River as it was originally called, appears prominently in nearly all the chronicles of Florida’s past. Indeed, many authorities claim that it was near the mouth of the St. Johns, rather than near St. Augustine, that Ponce de León first landed on Floridian soil. And when experts disagree who shall decide?

Probably no one will ever know beyond the shadow of a doubt just where the famous seeker for the Fountain of Youth actually stepped ashore in Florida. To be sure it is recorded that he landed at a spot 30 degrees 8 minutes north latitude. But little reliance can be placed on these figures. Navigation in the days of De León was a rather slipshod art in which guesswork played an important part; the instruments in use by the best of mariners were crude, primitive and unre-

liable, and the wonder is that ships ever reached their destinations or that pilots could ever find the same spot twice.

Islands and ports, even continents, were represented woefully out of place on the crude maps and charts then in use and it was seldom that any two maps were alike or even similar in the contours or latitude and longitude of the places shown. Years after Ponce de León "discovered" Florida, many of the most important and best known cities, islands and rivers of Europe were one hundred or more miles out of position on the maps. And considering the fact that London was represented as over thirty miles north of its actual site, Malta one hundred miles distant from where it should have been, Madeira nearly two hundred miles to the south of its real latitude and even Rome, Paris and other great cities from four to fifty miles east, west, north or south of where they belonged, how can anyone be sure where Ponce de León landed? Bad as were those old navigators' computations regarding their latitude, their longitude was even worse, and as late as 1687 Captain Sir William Phipps, who was an unusually expert seaman, found his longitude by "taking the average of six fine watches," as he stated in one of his journals. So when Ponce de León landed at a point on Florida's coast which was "thirty degrees and eight minutes north" he might have stepped ashore anywhere between Matanzas and Fernandina; and Jacksonville or the mouth of the St. Johns is just as good a bet as any other spot. But even if we conceded the honor of his first landing place to St. Augustine, Jacksonville—or rather its vicinity—has

a wealth of romantic history.

It was here, at the mouth of the St. Johns, that Jean Ribault landed and named the great river the May in honor of May Day on which he discovered it. Although the stream has since changed names more than once, Mayport by the river's mouth still perpetuates the original French name. And in this connection let me warn the uninitiated not to confuse Mayport and Maypop, the latter being the Florida name for the grenadilla or passion flower fruit, which calls to mind the reason why the vine was called "Passion flower" by the Spaniards.

History fails to inform us who first discovered the whole story of the Passion presented by the vine and its blossom; but doubtless it was some holy priest or friar, some Franciscan or Dominican monk who, like so many of his fellow clerics, was fanatically religious and sought in all things some significance or sign of Divine Presence, who expected miracles at any time, and who honestly and implicitly believed that the Lord of Hosts was leading the Spaniards to victory over the infidel Indians.

In those days an earthquake, a hurricane, a thunder storm or a meteor was regarded as a visible manifestation of God Almighty. The eruption of a volcano during the conquest of Chile was recorded as the vengeance of God upon the savages for having resisted the Christian Spaniards. When, during an *auto-da-fé* at Lima, Peru, a sudden tornado swept across the plaza, tearing away the canopies, unroofing the grandstand where the Viceroy and the Bishop were seated enjoying the spectacle, uprooting trees and scattering the firebrands from about the stake, the cyclonic blast was interpreted, not

as a manifestation of the wrath of God at the Spaniards for their inhumanity, but as the presence of Satan sweeping down to seize the accursed soul of the infidel dying by order of the Inquisition.

With their minds ever dwelling on sacred and religious matters, with the innumerable new and strange sights in the New World arousing their wonder and amazement, it is not so very surprising that in flowers and plants, birds and animals, even in fishes, they should have found symbols and signs of divine significance. And when some unknown friar gazed upon the Passion flower and saw the entire story of Christ's sufferings visibly portrayed, it is not surprising that the Holy Men should have dispatched long letters to Spain declaring that in the new-found lands there was a flower especially created by God to convince the infidel savages of the truths of Christianity and to bring them within the fold of the Holy Church.

Did not the corona show the Crown of Thorns, even the delicate filaments being seventy-two, the traditional number of thorns which tortured Christ's brow? Were there not five stamens symbolic of His five wounds? The ten disciples, minus Judas and Peter, were indicated by the petals and sepals. In the very center of the bloom was the Cross, surrounded by the pistils which represented the nails driven through His hands and feet. The half-formed seed capsule could be nothing less than the sponge dipped in vinegar; the stalk was the column against which Jesus supported himself while being scourged, and the lobed palmate leaves of the vine were surely symbolic of the hands of His persecutors. Once

knowing the key to this interpretation, anyone can see the divine symbols as readily as did the zealous fanatical eyes of the Spanish padres, and to the world at large it is far more familiar as the Passion flower than as the Maypop.

But to return to Jax and its historic and romantic associations. It was probably René de Laudonnière who first entered and explored the St. Johns, and among other strange sights which he reported were great monsters, half-man and half-fish, which bellowed like fiends and blew clouds of smoke from their nostrils. No doubt he referred to the manatees which formerly abounded in this and other Florida streams, and surely his description, wild and fanciful as it was, was far more in keeping with the facts and the appearance of the "sea cows" than was that of Columbus who described them as mermaids! No doubt, at the time of the Frenchman's journey up the St. Johns, it was a far more lovely stream than it is today, with broad expanses of open water unchoked by the water-hyacinth which, attractive and beautiful as it is, has become such a pest in Florida and the Canal Zone. It seems rather a pity that the suggestion, made a few years ago, of introducing hippopotami to Florida waters, was not followed out. They would have done much to keep the weeds under control; they would have afforded excellent sport for big game hunters; they would have provided a supply of really delectable meat, and they would have been an added "sight" to attract the tourists and visitors from the north.

René de Laudonnière was not particularly interested



in botany or natural history, however. He had come overseas to establish a settlement and take possession of Florida in the name of the King of France, and to find a safe and peaceful refuge for the Huguenots. And, as he was welcomed with the most friendly overtures by the Indians, he decided that no better place could be found than at the mouth of the River May. Here, therefore, commanding the river's mouth, he built Fort Caroline. That was in 1564, so even if St. Augustine can rightfully claim to be the oldest existing city in the Union, with the oldest buildings intact, the people of Jacksonville can truthfully claim that the earliest settlement was on territory in their vicinity.

However, while the walls and forts and buildings erected by the Spaniards at St. Augustine still stand, tangible and visible reminders of Florida's romantic past, Fort Caroline and the French settlement beside the St. Johns have long since vanished from the face of the earth, the land on which they stood having been completely washed away by floods and erosion. Neither did the French settlement endure for long. Within the year, on the twentieth of September, 1565, to be exact, Pedro Menéndez de Aviles, the Adelantado of St. Augustine, swept down upon the French, captured the fort which he renamed San Mateo, and annihilated the garrison.

From the very first the French had been on friendly terms with the Indians, and it was owing to the aid given by the subjects of Chief Satouriona that Laudonnière was able to construct the stout triangular fort in record time. But, as was the case throughout America,

there was a constant internecine state of war among the Indian tribes, and the French narrowly escaped disaster through their cupidity and their ignorance of this state of affairs.

Although they had come to Florida to find a safe refuge for the Huguenots, yet no sooner did they see Indians wearing gold and silver ornaments than their lust for riches became overwhelming. Laudonnière had sent Lieutenant Ottingay on an exploring expedition up the river. After traversing nearly one hundred miles of the waterway, or to the vicinity of Palatka, Ottingay met a tribe called Thimagoa who, when questioned as to the source of their few ornaments, declared they could lead him to a spot where precious metals might be obtained in abundance. Elated at having thus paved the way for vast riches—as he imagined—Ottingay returned to Fort Caroline. Immediately upon receiving his lieutenant's report, Laudonnière dispatched a second expedition in charge of Captain Vasseur to seek the potential El Dorado. After a few days' journey he met a chief who, being at war with his neighboring tribes, offered the Frenchman piles of gold if they would become his allies. To this Vasseur agreed and thus pledged his arms to the cause of a chief who was a mortal enemy of Satouriona. Luckily for the French, Laudonnière discredited his officers' arrangements, stood firmly by his friend Satouriona, and managed to maintain peace with the tribesmen.

But he was unable to maintain peace and good fellowship among his own fellow countrymen. Cliques and parties sprang into being; there were jealousies, com-

plaints and discontent; and, when the hoped-for riches failed to materialize, and fever and other sickness commenced to exact toll of the colonists, open sedition reared its ugly head. Laudonnière himself, though helpless with fever, was seized and carried off to a boat in the stream and the mutineers seized a second ship and sailed away. Once the malcontents had vanished Laudonnière was freed, new officials were elected and for a space matters went along smoothly; and when the mutineers returned, and were seized and shot, tranquillity reigned.

But with strange lack of foresight the French had failed to plant crops and, with their provisions all but exhausted, things began to look very black indeed. In fact, they were on the verge of abandoning the colony and returning when ships appeared entering the river. For a time hopes and fears beset the French by turns. Were they French vessels with succor or Spanish ships coming to destroy them? Their fears were set at rest and their delight was almost delirious when they discovered that they were British vessels under command of no less famous a personage than Sir Francis Drake, accompanied by Sir John Hawkins. Having supplied the starving Huguenots with provisions, and having sold them one of his ships, receiving several large cannon as payment, the British Admiral sailed away.

In the minds of the French there was no thought of remaining longer in Florida. They had had quite enough of the place, and with feverish activity they commenced preparations for the exodus to France in the newly acquired ship. But before they were ready to

sail a second fleet was seen approaching, and a little later Jean Ribault and his crew of Frenchmen came ashore. No longer was there any thought of deserting Fort Caroline. There were abundant stores, five hundred additional men, a number of women and children, and seven fine ships to swell the colony and its resources.

Joy and happiness and golden dreams filled the colonists, and then, suddenly, unexpectedly, the blow fell. Five days after Ribault had arrived a heavily armed galleon appeared, its rails bristling with guns, the flag of Spain flaunting its dreaded folds from the mizzenmast. It was the *San Pelayo*, the flagship of Menéndez, a craft of nearly one thousand tons burden, the most powerful ship of war in the New World at the time. To the terrified hail of the officers on Ribault's *Trinity* the Spanish Nemesis replied: "I am Pedro Menéndez de Aviles, and I have come hither to hang all heretics and Lutherans. At daybreak I shall attack, and every heretic shall die, although devout Catholics will be unharmed."

One must admire the courage of the French at this time, for, despite their knowledge that they were helpless in the face of such an enemy, although Menéndez had their ship under his guns, they shouted taunts, scoffing at the courage of a man who must wait until morning to attack, daring him to attempt it. In a towering rage the Spaniard commanded his men to board and seize the French vessels; but, slipping their cables and hoisting sail, the Huguenots put to sea, and although the great guns of the *San Pelayo* roared and thundered, the Frenchmen managed to escape.

Warned of the attack by the cannonade, the French

commanders had drawn up their forces along the river front, and Menéndez, despite his superior armament and number of men, hesitated to assault the place and sailed away to the present site of St. Augustine where he had left additional men and several ships. Upon his arrival, September 8, 1565, he landed, took formal possession of the land, and founded the oldest existing city in the United States. Hence the birth of St. Augustine was the direct result of the Spaniard's fear of attacking a handful of French Huguenots on the St. Johns River.

In the meantime the French at Fort Caroline had not been idle. They well knew that the Spanish forces would return, and one daring French skipper, relying upon the speed of his vessel and his superior skill as a navigator, actually trailed Menéndez's ships southward, saw what was being done at St. Augustine, and reported the results of his hazardous scouting trip to Ribault and Laudonnière. The French were in a dilemma, but to their credit no one suggested evacuating the colony and retreating.

Still there was the question of what course should be followed, and a Council of War was held. Should they busy themselves strengthening their fort and await the Spaniards' assault? Should they make a forced march overland and hurl themselves upon their enemies before the latter could prepare their newly established city to withstand an attack? Or should they man and arm their vessels and attack the Spaniards from the sea?

Each plan had its disadvantages. To march through the impenetrable jungle would be a dangerous undertaking and would leave their settlement undefended.

To shut themselves within the fort would mean the almost certain loss of their ships, and, while the naval attack would mean fighting a far superior flotilla, yet, by a surprise assault, there was a chance of crippling or destroying the Spanish vessels while their crews were ashore engaged in building forts and placing guns. Hence the plan for an attack by sea was decided upon, and on the fifteenth of September the French ships, crowded to overflowing with all available men, put to sea.

Then, as if to aid the Spaniards—as in fact the devout Dons declared was the case—a terrific hurricane swept up the Florida coast. For three days the cyclone raged, and when its fury abated little of Fort Caroline or the French settlement remained intact, the French ships were sunk, driven ashore or dismasted, and many members of their crews were lost. Worst of all, the French vessels had actually been within sight of St. Augustine when the hurricane burst upon them, and the Spaniards, watching their enemies being swept to death and destruction, devoutly dropped on their knees and gave thanks to God for his divine intervention in their behalf.

But Menéndez thoroughly believed in the old axiom that God helps those who help themselves. Realizing that Fort Caroline must have been left with only a skeleton garrison, he ordered his men to arm themselves and to prepare to march overland through the wilderness to attack the French settlement. To attempt such a march even in the best of weather would have been a perilous feat, but to undertake it during a hurricane

seemed little less than suicidal. Nothing, however, could dissuade Menéndez. Had he not with his own eyes witnessed the utter destruction of the French fleet by the hand of a wrathful God? Were not the Spaniards carrying on a holy war for the annihilation of heretics? Divine power would guard them through the jungles, he was confident, and on September seventeenth they set forth—five hundred mail-clad men led by a renegade Frenchman. Torn by thorns, floundering through mire, drenched by rain, buffeted by the terrific gale, climbing over great piles of wind-uprooted trees, tortured by insects, and in constant peril of poisonous serpents, they kept doggedly on and two days later reached the high land in the rear of Fort Caroline with the unsuspecting French settlement spread out below them.

No one was on watch, and, over the ramparts and through the gaping holes left by the hurricane in the walls, the Spanish poured, without a hand being raised in resistance, without a shot being fired by the French. There is some excuse for this when we consider that there were less than one hundred Frenchmen left at the settlement, and only ten of these possessed weapons. Laudonnière and a few followers managed to escape and hide in the swamps, but of the entire population only these and fifty women and children survived the slaughter; but not a single Spaniard was lost.

Not content with their butchery, the blood-crazed Spaniards gathered on the bank of the river, and, in plain view and hearing of a number of French, who, having been aboard a small vessel, had escaped the massacre, they hacked and mutilated the corpses and tossed

them into the stream. Then, seizing fifteen of their captives, the Spanish commander ordered them hanged to the nearest trees, and on the breasts of the horribly dangling corpses he placed placards on which were written the words *No por Frances; sino por Luteranos*. (Not as Frenchmen; but as Lutherans).

Of that entire colony only twenty-six escaped the fanatical fury of Menéndez and his men at Fort Caroline, and these eventually found their way back to the ship at anchor in the stream and in her reached Europe. Of Ribault's forces aboard the hurricane-wrecked fleet, scores had been drowned, but Ribault and a number of his men had escaped, and, toiling through the palmettos and thorny scrub, they were painfully striving to work their way back to Fort Caroline, utterly ignorant, of course, of the tragedy which had taken place there.

The first party of these shipwrecked men had reached a spot near what is now Matanzas when the Spaniards, who had been apprised of their presence by Indian scouts, appeared upon the scene. Telling them of the fate of Fort Caroline and their countrymen, Menéndez assured them of safety and kind treatment if they would surrender, ordering them to deliver themselves up in parties of ten. On the verge of starvation, with no choice in the matter, and trusting to the Spaniard's promises, the two hundred French refugees agreed. Then, tying his prisoners' arms behind their backs, Menéndez led them to a mark he made on the sand and ordered his men to butcher the entire party in cold blood. Only one man, badly wounded, lived and escaped to tell the awful tale.



Two days later Ribault and three hundred and more survivors of the shipwreck appeared, and once again the Spanish commandant promised safety and quarter. There were men in this company who had no faith in Spanish promises and who refused to surrender, vowing that they would sooner trust to cannibal savages than to the Dons, but Ribault and one hundred and fifty of his fellows accepted the Spaniard's terms, only to be stabbed to death as their fellow countrymen had been.

With the destruction of Fort Caroline by the Spanish, the French occupation came to an end. The Spaniards renamed the fort San Mateo and maintained a small settlement there until they in turn were destroyed by De Gourgues as already related. Then the St. Johns was left to the Indians, the alligators, the birds and Nature, until, in 1816, a trading post was established at Cowfordia, and from this humble beginning rose the city of Jacksonville. Here we must again turn back the pages of history to the Republic of Florida described in the previous chapter.

As an independent republic, that of East Florida expired on January 25, 1814, when its rights and holdings were ceded to the United States at Fort Mitchell on Lake Bryant. It had existed for three years, but in a rather slipshod manner and ever in a state of semi-hostility with the Spanish authorities. In fact its members were scarcely more than bandits, lawless armed men and rangers, for which we can scarcely blame them when we consider the conditions existing in Florida at that time. War with England had left the country disturbed and in a state of unrest, hundreds of slaves had

run away from the Spanish and other plantations and had either joined the Indians or had formed bands of Negro raiders; the country was full of cattle rustlers and desperadoes, and many of the more turbulent Indians had seized the opportunity to destroy property and murder the settlers whose presence they resented.

As a result, peaceable, honest settlers found life in Florida about as far from peaceful or secure as could well be imagined, and every man was forced to carry what passed for the law in a holster at his hip. Although the Republic possessed a constitution (which is still preserved) and duly constituted laws and officials, yet no one appeared ready or willing to administer or enforce the law; and the only solution to the problems of the settlers appeared to be recognition of the Spanish government, which was finally agreed to at a meeting held at Waterman's Bluff on the St. Johns River. Then, just as peace and a modicum of safety and order seemed to be assured under Governor Coppinger, the Spanish Governor of Florida, a most romantic and remarkable figure appeared on the scene.

Like so many a romantic adventurer of the past, this McGregor was a Scotchman. As a soldier of fortune he had served under General Bolivar in the South American wars of independence. Life never moved slowly nor along dull and humdrum lines for McGregor. Not only was he a soldier of fortune, a filibuster, and very near to being a pirate, but in addition he was a born promoter and a business man. In these trades his canny Scotch character stood him in good stead.

Luring the merchants of Charleston and Savannah

with promises of large and lucrative concessions, McGregor obtained funds for an expedition with which he seized Amelia Island and took possession of his newly acquired territory in the joint names of Venezuela and the Argentine, although neither of these South American states had the slightest inkling of his activities or of his whereabouts. He had counted upon the citizens of the Republic of East Florida to stand back of him, but in this he was sadly disappointed, the Republicans having plenty to occupy their minds elsewhere. But he was not a man to acknowledge defeat, and with a tiny force and practically no funds he maintained his supremacy and added to his company and his power by inviting several notorious pirates to make the island their headquarters.

Gladly the freebooters took advantage of McGregor's offer, and from the masts of vessels off the island the black flag flaunted its folds in open defiance of Spanish authorities and the world at large. But the Scotch monarch of all he surveyed was not satisfied, and sending a ship to Mexico he imported over one hundred of the citizens of that republic and placed his little kingdom under the Mexican flag. For a time this strange and remarkable state of affairs continued to exist, with the Mexican flag flying over a portion of Florida which was a notorious pirates' lair under a Scotch soldier of fortune as ruler. Apparently the Spanish authorities either winked at McGregor and his piratical friends, or possibly the rascals made it worth while for the Spaniards to ignore their presence. At all events nothing was done about it, and not until the Amelia Islanders, grow-

ing bolder, began to prey upon American shipping, were they seriously disturbed. But at last, in 1817, the United States decided that pirates were a nuisance and that pirates and filibusters having a refuge on the coast of Florida were unendurable. So President Monroe ordered troops to proceed to McGregor's island, and,



after seizing or destroying the lawless inhabitants, to restore the place to Spain.

With the change of flags from Spain to the United States great improvements took place in Florida. Jacksonville and its neighboring towns grew and prospered, life and property became more secure, and though there were raids and massacres during the Seminole War, though Jacksonville changed hands from Confederates to Federals and back again time after time during

the Civil War, though during the conflict the city was fired, attacked and the scene of battle, it suffered more from yellow fever than from the war. It was in 1888 that the fearful epidemic swept across Florida, and for four months—from August until November—Jacksonville was the center of the plague. Over four thousand cases were reported; there were over four hundred deaths; and the terror-stricken citizens appeared to be doomed to utter extinction when, as if by the intervention of Divine aid, a heavy frost visited the city on the twenty-eighth of November and accomplished what human efforts and medical science had failed to do.

Three years later the city was practically destroyed by fire; over four hundred acres of the town were completely wiped out and a vast amount of property, including priceless and irreplaceable historical documents, went up in flames and smoke.



## CHAPTER III

### HISTORIC GROUND

Southward to St. Augustine. The oldest city in the United States. Historic sites and buildings. Modern St. Augustine. The assault by Sir Francis Drake. A pirate's raid. Border wars. The lost chapel. Florida under the English flag. A fair exchange. The Bahamas buy Florida. Florida comes under the Stars and Stripes.

ST. AUGUSTINE, the oldest existing city in the United States, and boasting within its borders the oldest European buildings in the Union, may well be proud of its romantic and thrilling history. And if, as many believe, Ponce de León landed at or near St. Augustine, then the charming old town may claim an even greater distinction—that of having been built where a European's feet first trod the soil of what is now the United States.

St. Augustine has so long been famed as our oldest city, and its many relics and ruins of bygone days and the Spanish occupation are so well and widely known and have become such a Mecca for visitors that it is scarcely necessary to mention them. Fort Marion, the oldest house, the Governor's palace, the Ponce de León tablet, the ancient cathedral bells—even the so-called "Fountain of Youth"—are all drawing cards which are publicized, advertised, pictured, described and are annually visited by thousands.

But there is much of romantic and historic interest

dians with one hand and sought to win them to the Cross with the other—quixotic, courtly, gallant, brave, fanatical, cruel and despicable, yet indomitable conquerors, marvelous navigators, tireless explorers and zealous patriots.

Such were the men who paved the way for Florida and St. Augustine of today. Menéndez, the founder of the city, who slaughtered the helpless Huguenots, whose tombstone, presented to St. Augustine by the founder's native city, Aviles in Spain, is one of the Florida city's prized treasures. Pedro de Ybarra who, in 1609, completed the Governor's House that is still standing and in daily use. Albara Mexia, the King's surveyor who was made an Indian cacique, the first European ever honored in this way. Pedro Calderon, the "Guardian of the Royal Treasure Chest," who was removed from office because of a nagging wife and the fact that he kept a butcher shop, thus lowering his dignity. Don Pedro Ruitinez who, with the Treasurer and the Judge, took dishonest control of the government, appropriated the city's funds and spent hush money with a lavish hand—the first instance of political graft and a "Tammany" organization in North America. Alonzo Aranquil who was greatly perturbed by the bootlegging being carried on under his nose even in those old days. These were but a few of the many who carved Florida's history from morass and jungle, from pirates and hostile Indians, and maintained Spain's supremacy in the New World.

It is indeed fortunate for St. Augustine, and our country at large, that so many relics and ruins of those early days still exist, and, considering the wars and as-

saults, the storms and stresses, the raids and attacks, the lootings and the burnings which St. Augustine has suffered in the past, the marvel is that a trace of the Spanish works remains.

In 1586 Sir Francis Drake attacked and took the town and fired it, after demolishing the forts, and only a few of the buildings escaped the flames. But nothing seems to have discouraged the Dons, and no sooner had the famous British sea fighter sailed away from the smoking ruins than the Spaniards commenced to rebuild their razed city. Among the buildings destroyed was the King's House begun in 1596 which stood on the site of the present Post Office and Custom House. Also, at this time, a stronger fort of triangular shape was constructed and christened San Marco. Though no known traces of this old fortress remain, Fort Marion was built upon the same site and doubtless much of the stone of the earlier fortress was used in building the structure which is, perhaps, St. Augustine's most famous and well-known relic. It was during this period of reconstruction (1603), also, that the Governor's House was completed, an ambitious edifice which had required seven years to construct.

Rebuilding a city in those days and at that spot was not an easy—nor for that matter a safe—undertaking. Pirates sailed the neighboring seas and were given to swooping down most unexpectedly upon Spanish towns. Fever, both malarial and yellow, was a constant menace, and everywhere in the swamps and jungles were the savage, implacable Indians who, abused, exploited and enslaved by the Spaniards, were only too ready and will-



ing to ravish, murder and destroy whenever an opportunity offered. Again and again the outlying missions were attacked, burned and leveled to the ground and the monks and other inmates massacred by the Indians. The first hospital built in St. Augustine was so lacking in sanitary conditions that the governor reported that three out of six who entered it to be cured were brought forth corpses, and the mortality among the people was terrible. There were swarms of mosquitoes and other noxious insects against which the Spaniards had no protection. Sanitation was practically non-existent, and the climate was infinitely trying to the Spaniards who, for their own protection, were forced to wear armor almost constantly, and who continued to dress in the padded silks and velvets, the ruffles and furbelows of Spanish fashion. Moreover, they constantly faced a shortage of food and what they did have was of the coarsest and poorest kind.

The Indians, too, were a constant menace, for they greatly outnumbered the Europeans and, while hundreds had been Christianized and partly civilized, there were many more who steadfastly refused to bow to the Spanish rule or to the Spaniards' religion. One can scarcely wonder at this when we read of the terrible treatment accorded even the friendly natives. As there was an abundance of raw material to be had for the taking, the Indians received far less consideration than the Negro slaves, who had a tangible monetary value; and practically all the heaviest, most degrading and heart-breaking toil was performed by these aborigines. When smallpox, introduced by the Spaniards, swept

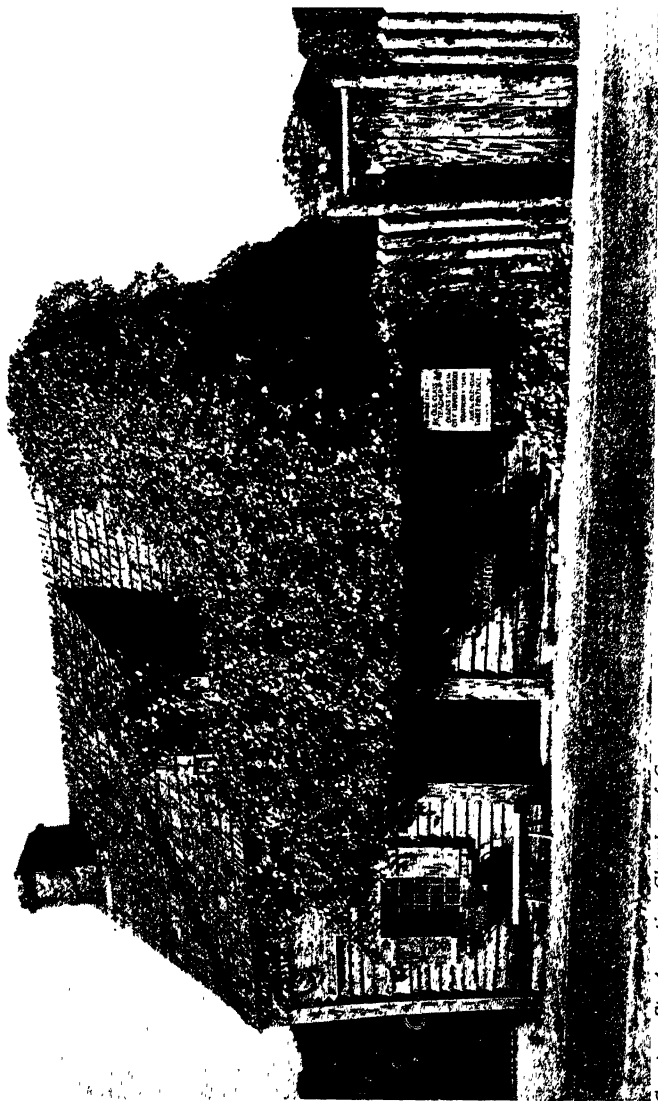
through the Indian villages, and the natives died off by hundreds, the Dons were greatly troubled—not because of the tragedy and bereavement of the Indians, but because they feared the dread epidemic might kill so many that there would not be enough left to supply them with slave labor.

But the Indians were far less of a danger than the pirates and the Dons' European foes. For twenty years the Dutch raided Spanish ships almost with impunity and frequently varied their activities by sailing along the Florida coast and sacking the towns. The British, during the frequent periods of warfare between Spain and England, did likewise; and, as it took long months for news to reach Florida from Spain, it not infrequently happened that an enemy fleet would appear off the port, cannonade the fort, bombard the town and take possession before the amazed inhabitants knew that war had been declared.

In some ways the pirates were even worse, for no one could foresee when some dread buccaneer might suddenly appear and ravish and burn and loot without mercy. Thus, in 1665, Davis—that "Hoary old Pirate" as his fellow buccaneers called him—swept down on St. Augustine with seven ships; and, although the fort was very strong and was fully garrisoned by a force of over two hundred men, yet such terror did the English buccaneers inspire in the hearts of the Spaniards that the defenders of St. Augustine fled without offering the least resistance, leaving Davis and his piratical crew to plunder the city at their leisure—a task which they performed most thoroughly.

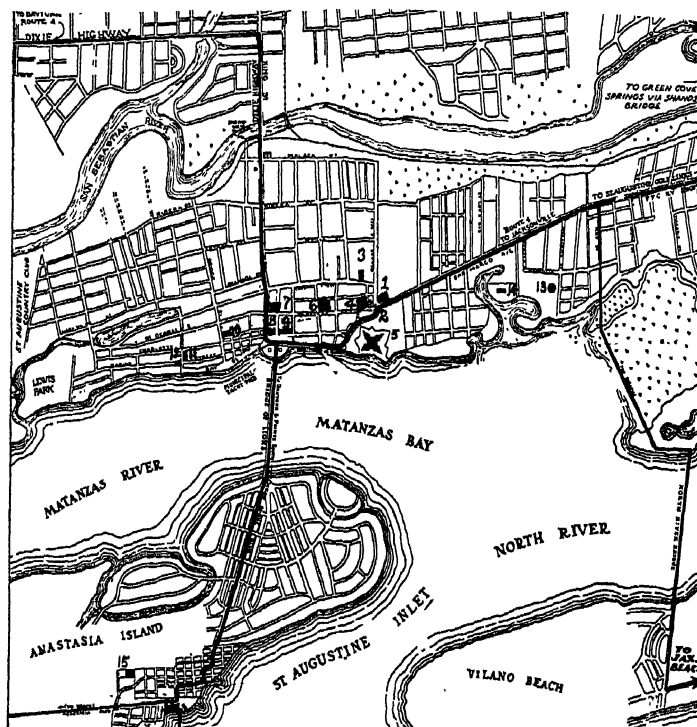
Considering all these interruptions and calamities, it is not surprising that several years were required to erect a far from imposing building. Rather it is amazing that the Spaniards should have held on so tenaciously to Florida, for there was no gold or other treasure to attract them; agriculture, such as it was, amounted to nothing; there were neither valuable woods nor spices; and just why Spain persisted in striving to maintain her control of Florida is something of a mystery. Surely, looking back at the history of those days, reading of the terrific sacrifice of human life, the sufferings and hardships, the trials and tribulations, the never-ceasing perils looming black on the near horizon, and the tremendous monetary expenses involved, we wonder why Spain considered the game worth the candle. And it is rather fascinating to speculate on what might have happened, what great changes would have occurred in North America, had Spain abandoned Florida and left it for the British, the French, the Dutch, the pirates and the Indians to fight and squabble over among themselves.

But "once a Spanish possession always a Spanish possession" was their motto, and throughout their American domains the Dons ever clung, like shipwrecked mariners, to a straw of territory which they had conquered and brought under their flag and Mother Church. By their zeal, their prowess and their courage they *did* succeed in retaining the greater portion of their original American possessions, despite wars and pestilence, despite Holland, England, France and the buccaneers, despite Indian uprisings and even the cataclysms of Nature; and of those domains which they lost



*Courtesy St. Augustine Chamber of Commerce*

OLDEST SCHOOLHOUSE IN U. S.



MAP OF ST. AUGUSTINE

Showing Historic Buildings and Points of Interest

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Old Huguenot cemetery                          | 8 Old slave market                                 |
| 2 City gates; part of old city walls, 1620       | 9 Cathedral  |
| 3 Old Spanish cemetery                           | 10 House of Don Toledo                             |
| 4 Oldest school in U. S.                         | 11 Oldest house in U. S. Used a Historical Society |
| 5 Fort Marion                                    | 12 State arsenal; formerly Franciscan Monastery    |
| 6 City Building                                  | 13 Fountain of Youth                               |
| 7 Post office; formerly Spanish Governor's house | 14 La Leche cemetery                               |
| 15 Alligator Farm                                |  |

Florida was one of the last to go.

Much of Spain's loss of prestige and power in the New World was the direct result of her brutal and inhuman treatment of the Indians (although we as a nation can scarcely afford to point an accusing finger); for the aborigines, ever smarting under the abuses they had suffered, aching for vengeance, were always ready to join forces with any enemy of Spain.

Thus it was in Florida, and the first really great reverses which the Florida Spaniards suffered were brought about by their hanging a prominent chief named Nichosatti who was accused of aiding the English against Spain, although he eloquently and vehemently denied having done so. At this time (1680), there were large numbers of Indians in the vicinity of St. Augustine, over three hundred dwelling just beyond the fifteen hundred yard limits outside the city's gates at a place then called Macarasi.

Today the Nelmar Terrace and the so-called "Fountain of Youth" occupy the site of the old Indian village of the Yamassees, the name of Macariz Creek by which it was formerly known having been altered to a more alluring and romantic cognomen during recent years.

Although they had been living on fairly friendly terms with the Spaniards, and while most of them had become Christians and semicivilized, the unwarranted execution of Nichosatti roused them to savage fury, and in their desire for vengeance they joined the British and led their new allies against the Dons, with the result that the Spaniards were driven from all their coastal settlements from the St. Johns River to the Altamaha.

This was the first wedge of British occupation driven into Spanish Florida, but once the split was started it rapidly widened, although it was not until 1702 that the British of the Carolina colonies made serious efforts to wrest northern Florida from Spanish rule.

Aided by the Yamassees with six hundred warriors, and with an equal number of his own troops, Governor Moore moved southward to the St. Johns, traveling mainly in dugout canoes and following the intricate waterways known to the Indians. Then, disembarking, the forces marched overland toward St. Augustine. Small as the Carolina "army" was it was more than ample to take the Spanish city, as it proved, for a portion of the attackers under Colonel Daniels arrived several days in advance of the other party, under Governor Moore, and when the latter reached their objective they found the Colonel and his men already in possession of St. Augustine. Upon the appearance of the British, practically all the Spaniards fled for safety to the fort and cowered there, without making an effort to drive the enemy off by means of their heavy guns. Realizing that it would be a waste of energy and ammunition to attempt to batter down the mighty walls with his light arms, Governor Moore despatched Colonel Daniels to Jamaica to secure adequate artillery.

So far the British had had the best of it and possibly, had the fighting Colonel remained at St. Augustine, there would have been a very different sequel to a story which shows the British in a far from heroic light. While awaiting Daniels' return, Governor Moore was terrified to see two Spanish ships approaching, and with-

out attempting to defend the town he had taken he retreated in a panic, leaving his arms, supplies and provisions behind him. Perhaps, in the whole history of colonial border warfare, there was no greater exhibition of craven cowardice on the part of the British, and so great a contempt did his Indian allies feel for the Governor that they then and there withdrew their support and deserted the British forces.

Yet Moore, vilified and scoffed at by his fellow countrymen in Carolina, even threatened with personal violence and discredited by the legislature, redeemed himself two years later. With a volunteer force of twenty-five men, raised and equipped at his own expense, and with over one thousand Indian warriors whom he somehow induced to join him, he attacked Fort San Luis not far from Tallahassee. Never in the whole bloody history of Florida was there a more sanguinary, destructive and disastrous battle. With his force of nearly five hundred trained soldiers, Don Juan Mexia, the Spanish Governor, contemptuously marched from his fort to meet the horde of untrained Indians and their handful of British allies. In the fearful battle that followed Don Juan and nearly every man of his command were killed, the fort was taken and put to the torch, plantations, convents and missions were utterly destroyed for miles about, and the few Spaniards who survived were taken prisoners, while more than a thousand Indian allies of the Spaniards were transported to Georgia and sold as slaves. This fearful border battle marked the end of Spain's dominion of northern Florida.

Although the success of the British was due entirely



to their Indian allies, yet they showed no more gratitude toward the redmen than did the Spaniards; and, a few years later, when under a Spanish edict the Indians about St. Augustine were compelled to move into the wilderness and left their helpless children and their women to gather their meager crops and join them later, the British fell upon these utterly defenseless people and ruthlessly slaughtered over five hundred of them, destroyed their provisions and huts, and left more than one thousand to die miserably of exposure and starvation.

But to return to St. Augustine and its historic associations. In a recently erected chapel dedicated to Nuestra Señora Maria de la Leche, the visitor may notice two lovely cherubs whose faces bear the mark of age and seem entirely out of keeping with the rest of the structure. The history of these is both interesting and romantic, and dates back to 1593 when Friar Montes erected a little chapel by the side of the Caño de Leche (Milk Creek) at Nombre de Dios. Four years later the Indians swept down, murdered Fray Blas de Rodriguez and partly demolished the chapel. Then, in 1728, Don Antonio Malini, the Governor of St. Augustine, fearing that the British, then besieging the city, might take possession of the partly ruined chapel and use it as a temporary fort, commanded that it should be entirely torn down and destroyed.

Two centuries and more passed. The little chapel of "Our Blessed Lady of the Milk" was forgotten; the grave which held the body of the murdered and scalped Padre had become lost; and the story of the Indian raid

and the events which followed had become an almost forgotten legend. Then, in 1930, workmen engaged in clearing the brush and weeds from a vacant lot came upon a vine-covered mound of cut stone. Sorting this over, the antiquarians found slabs still bearing the colored stucco of Spanish workmen of centuries gone, the frescoed plaster of a chapel's walls and, miraculously preserved, the lovely faces of two cherubs. And so today one may again gaze upon the work of some great but unknown Spanish artist who painted the cherubs' faces on the chapel walls over three centuries ago, and which for two hundred years lay buried in a pile of débris above the grave of the martyred monk.

Although every American of average education and intelligence knows that the United States acquired Florida from Spain in 1821, yet there are many who do not know that Florida had already changed hands and flags more than once before it became an integral part of the Union, while for a considerable period it belonged to England. This happened back in 1760, when the British captured Havana, and under the treaty of peace exchanged Cuba for Florida. But the treasure which England had captured in Cuba and from two treasure ships, and which amounted to over twenty-seven million dollars, was not included in the trade and remained in British hands.

Under English rule Florida forged rapidly ahead toward peace and prosperity and during twenty years under the British flag progressed more than it had during nearly three centuries under the Spaniards. The British established two capitals, one at Pensacola, the

other at St. Augustine, a seemingly unnecessary expense considering that at the time when England acquired the country there were less than six hundred white inhabitants in Florida. Matters went along smoothly; the population increased, plantations were established and several ambitious colonization schemes were attempted. But as is so generally the case, these were for the most part complete failures, owing partly to the promoters' and the colonists' utter ignorance of conditions, and more largely to the fact that the wrong type of people were induced to emigrate to the new land. Instead of restricting the colonists to agriculturalists, mechanics and men with useful trades, the authorities allowed the scum of shiftless, useless flotsam and jetsam of the cities to form the bulk of the settlers. In fact one colony on the St. Johns was composed mainly of ex-convicts, and included three hundred street women from the slums of London!

An even more tragic scheme was that of a Dr. Turnbull, a Scotchman who obtained a concession that extended from Tomoka to New Smyrna. It was in honor of his wife, who was a Greek and a native of Smyrna, that the latter town was named, and it was largely her private fortune that financed the scheme. As colonists, Dr. Turnbull brought over Levantines, Majorcans and Minorcans and, had there been proper sanitary and medical supervision and intelligent and constructive management, the colony doubtless would have prospered and succeeded. But malaria played havoc with the newcomers and there were dissensions in which some remained steadfastly royalists while others openly

upheld the revolutionary sentiments of the thirteen colonies in the north. Also, the mixture of Mediterranean races, of Latins and Greeks and Slavs, led to innumerable quarrels, mutinies and even fatal duels. There must have been some coöperation and some hard-working, ambitious members of the colony, for drainage ditches made by them are still in existence and in daily use. But the colony was doomed to annihilation, partly from internal troubles and partly through causes that could not have been foreseen and could not have been overcome had they been expected. War broke out between England and her North American colonies, the colonial privateers captured the ships laden with stores for the Florida colonists, and starvation faced them. Many deserted and, in order to compel the remainder to labor and raise crops, and to keep the colony intact, Turnbull was forced to use most rigorous methods.

From indentured settlers, over whom he exercised unlimited power, to slaves was but a short step, and in the extremity which he faced we cannot blame Turnbull too harshly if he used strenuous, even cruel and inhuman methods and became transformed to a veritable Simon Legree in his futile efforts to maintain the colony in which he had sunk every dollar that he, his wife and his friends possessed. But his cruelties, his slave-driving methods and his severity only made matters worse. In a few years the members of the colony had dwindled from nearly two thousand to only nine hundred, and shortly thereafter the Turnbull or New Smyrna colony died a natural death. Its existence is perpetuated in the local names—New Smyrna, Turn-

bull, Scottsmoore, etc.; and scattered over eastern Florida are dark-skinned Greeks and swarthy Latins, descendants of the men and women from the Balearic Islands and the Levant who were members of the ill-starred colony.

With the outbreak of the Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a dramatic incident took place in St. Augustine. A mass meeting was called, the British Governor, Tonym, made a fiery and patriotic speech, and the inhabitants, who were steadfastly loyal to the Crown, burned John Quincy Adams and John Hancock in effigy in the plaza.

Following the outbreak of hostilities, thousands of Royalists from Georgia, the Carolinas and farther north fled to Florida, which, throughout the war, remained loyal to Great Britain; and with this sudden influx of settlers came Florida's first real "boom." But Florida was, figuratively, between the devil and the deep sea. England was not only at war with her North American colonies but with France, Spain and Holland as well; and with the revolutionists on the north, the Spanish and French in the neighboring West Indies, and the Spanish colony of Louisiana on the west, Florida was open to attack from every direction. Yet, despite several invasions and the fact that Pensacola was captured by the Spanish forces, the British in Florida managed to hold their own until the conclusion of the war with Spain in 1783. Then, as is often the case, the recently warring powers, in arranging their terms of peace, neither consulted nor considered the wishes or the well-being of their subjects in the colonies, and under the



*Courtesy St. Augustine Chamber of Commerce*

WATCH TOWER OF FORT SAN MARCO, ST. AUGUSTINE



*Courtesy St. Augustine Chamber of Commerce*

OLD DON TOLEDO HOUSE, ST. AUGUSTINE

treaty Florida was restored to Spain in exchange for the Bahamas. Doubtless England felt that she had much the best of the bargain, for her tenure of Florida had been expensive and unremunerative.

The country consisted mainly of impenetrable jungles and vast Everglades inhabited by Indians who were forever giving trouble and refused to be subdued; sugar cane and similar profitable crops had not proved successful; and it was almost impossible to hold slaves, who were constantly running away and finding refuge in the everglades or among the Indians. The Bahamas on the other hand were islands where slaves were as safe as in a prison; they were immune to frosts and cold weather; tropical crops were promising great profit and prosperity; and, as following Lord Rodney's victories in the Caribbean the majority of the West Indies had come under the English flag, the British felt that the Bahamas should rightfully be theirs.

How frequently, in recent years, must the British have regretted that international barter of 1783! How often must they have figuratively kicked themselves for having exchanged our glorious fruit garden, our great winter playground for the almost worthless Bahama Islands!

Following this trading of property, many of the British inhabitants of Florida migrated to Nassau, Eleuthera, Grand Bahama, Abaco and other islands of the Bahamas rather than remain under the Spanish flag and Spanish rule, and today one finds many families of the same name both in Florida and the Bahamas.

Although, under the British, Florida had prospered,

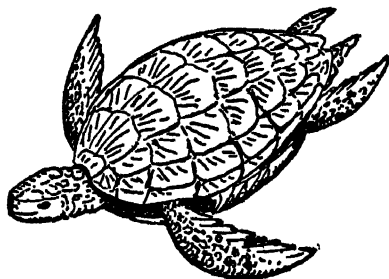


indigo plantations had been established, tar, pitch, resin and turpentine had been exploited, and even a certain amount of sugar and much rum had been produced, yet the colony had never paid expenses and there had been an annual deficit of over one hundred thousand dollars—an immense sum in those days. With the resumption of Spanish dominion, Florida rapidly went from bad to worse. The majority of the British left for the Bahamas, Jamaica, the West Indies, Bermuda or the United States. The few settlers who hung on to their property were oppressed, bled by taxes and reduced to abject poverty and actual want. Within a few short years the white population had decreased to a mere fraction of the inhabitants who, under British rule, had been on the fair road to lasting prosperity while of all the towns, villages and settlements, only Pensacola and St. Augustine remained—filthy, unsanitary, pest-ridden, slovenly cities with scarcely more inhabitants than good-sized villages.

Florida was destined to change hands once again and to see two more flags flying over its territory. In 1821 the long-drawn-out negotiations for its sale to the United States were completed. Spain formally and finally ceded Florida to Uncle Sam, and the Stars and Stripes were hoisted over forts and public buildings as the “blood and gold” of Spain came fluttering down. But with the outbreak of the Civil War Florida was among the first of the states to secede, and went her sister states one better by declaring herself “a sovereign and independent nation.”

So once again a different flag flaunted its folds to the warm breeze, and the Stars and Bars took the place of Stars and Stripes. During that fateful struggle Florida passed back and forth from Confederate to Federal forces time and time again, and its people found themselves first under one flag and then under another, until at last peace came and the Floridians breathed easily and settled down to build a commonwealth of prosperity under Old Glory.

Today Florida may boast not only that she is the oldest state in the Union in point of discovery and settlement, but also that no other state has been under so many different flags—Spanish, French, British, Confederate States, United States—five, all told, and—yes, if we count the flags of the two Florida Republics, that of Mexico, and those of Venezuela and Argentina, which have flown above certain sections of Florida, a total of ten flags that have been hoisted over Florida's soil!



## CHAPTER IV

### WHERE SUMMER SPENDS THE WINTER

Flagler's gigantic scheme. The romance of the East Coast Railway. The course of empire moves southward. Indian River. The citrus fruit industry. Where oranges are king. Ocean beaches and old forts. Matanzas, ruins of the old missions. Anastasia. Fort Pierce and some relics of pirate days. An honest man. Strange signs. The millionaires' playground. Sunken treasures.

THE transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States marked a new era in Florida's history. Yet for many years the greater portion of the country remained an untamed wilderness, a vast morass populated by the implacable Seminoles and Creeks, its only white inhabitants the garrisons of the outflung forts. Even as recently as sixty years ago Rockledge was the most southerly settlement on the east coast; Fort Pierce was in the heart of the Indian country; and Indian River was a wild, almost unknown area, the haunt of wild fowl and flamingoes. St. Petersburg was nonexistent; Okeechobee was scarcely more than a semilegendary lake somewhere in the heart of the Everglades; and there was not a farm, plantation, settlement or town throughout all the district between Jupiter and Biscayne Bay and the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. Indian warfare, raids and massacres, lack of transportation, the character of the country and its evil reputation as a white man's grave

all militated against its settlement and development, and it was not until one man dreamed a dream and, by his incredible energy, his optimism, his foresight, and his fortune, made his dream come true, that Florida attracted any wide attention and came into its own.

This man was Henry M. Flagler, and his dream was to carry a railway southward along the Florida east coast to Key West. Mr. Flagler's first Florida venture was the erection of the Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine, in 1866, for with true prophetic vision he saw in Florida's climate a future equal to or greater than that offered by its development as an agricultural state. And he realized that unless there were ample and suitable accommodations for travelers there would be few travelers on his railway. The Ponce de Leon met with such success that Flagler built the Alcazar. But St. Augustine was by no means tropical or even semi-tropical in its winter climate. Frosts and freezing weather were not uncommon, and Flagler dreamed of great winter resorts far to the southward where cold would be unknown, where tropical vegetation would thrive, where hundreds of miles of white beaches and tepid Gulf Stream water would attract thousands of visitors each winter.

Purchasing a tiny narrow-gauge railway, this pioneer of Florida's future widened and extended it to Daytona. Here other great hotels were built, and onward the little railway pushed its course, until in 1892 it had reached Rockledge. For a space it seemed as if that would be the end of the East Coast Railroad and of Henry Flagler's dream. Land disputes over the right of way and other troubles arose, but at length all was settled and in

1896 the first train rumbled into the station at Miami. Nine years later, in 1905, the greatest undertaking of all was begun—the building of a railway on bridges and piers across the ocean from the tip of Florida to Key West.

Hurricanes, federal interference, labor troubles and the financial panic of 1907 all were seemingly insurmountable obstacles to the undertaking; but the road moved slowly, steadily on; the causeway stretched from key to key, and in 1912, seven years after it had been commenced, the marvelous piece of engineering—a monumental example of construction work that was half a century in advance of its time, the longest causeway in the entire world—was completed and Flagler's dream had come true.

The Empire Builder had triumphed, despite the forces of Nature, the interference of governments, the jeers of engineers, and his advanced age. His tireless energy, his genius, his indomitable spirit and his vision won success; and, although he lived but a year after the completion of this stupendous task, he died happy and content that the dream of his life had become an accomplished fact and that, in his eighty-second year, he had ridden in his private car over his own railway from St. Augustine to Key West.

But even Flagler, with his vision, his ideals and his genius, could not foresee the great concrete highways paralleling his railway or the thousands of motor cars that bring visitors from every state in the union to Florida each year. And could he rise from the grave he would rub his eyes in utter amazement at the stream of

speeding cars flashing along the Federal and the Dixie Highways and transporting ten times as many visitors to Florida as are carried on his railway.

Yet, had it not been for Flagler and his East Coast Railway there would have been none of the palatial hotels, the magnificent mansions, or the scores of delightful towns that now reach in an almost unbroken chain from north to south along the Florida coast. Daytona, Ormond, New Smyrna, Vero Beach, Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Fort Lauderdale, Miami are but a few of the thriving towns and charming winter resorts that Flagler's railway brought into being.

Few of these, however, possess either romantic or historic backgrounds. But just beyond St. Augustine lies Matanzas with its ruins of the ancient Spanish fort, built in 1735. Here Ribault first landed, and here in 1565 Pedro Menéndez slaughtered the shipwrecked Huguenots. Still farther southward is New Smyrna, the site of Turnbull's ill-starred colony. Here, a few years ago, excavations in a supposed Indian mound disclosed the ruined walls of a stone building and some fragments of European earthenware relics which revealed the "mound" as a mere superficial layer of shells and sand covering the remains of one of Turnbull's buildings.

Also, some two or three miles west of New Smyrna are the crumbling walls of an ancient Spanish mission built by the zealous monks in the sixteenth century. Although as far as is known there are no records telling us of its fate, yet undoubtedly it was one of the many missions that were raided and burned by the hostile Indians who slew the holy inmates, and left the smol-

dering ruins and the scalped and ghastly corpses to the buzzards and the encroaching jungles.

For many years Florida's chief fame, her greatest prosperity and her greatest lure for immigrants from the north was her citrus fruits. And of all Florida's fruit-growing districts that of the Indian River is probably the most famous. Indian River oranges and Indian River grapefruit are household words; and here, where the highway passes for mile after mile through endless groves of orange, lemon, lime and grapefruit orchards, the orange reigns king supreme, although of late years the paper-shelled pecan is doing its best to share the royal throne.

But the Indian River no longer has a monopoly of citrus fruits. In every part of Florida there are groves of oranges, lemons, limes and grapefruit, and, as in the past the Indian River orchards have suffered more than once from severe frosts, the more southerly fruit growers have a greater security and a greater advantage. Yet so famed are the Indian River fruits that today any and all Florida citrus fruits are sold as "Indian River" in the northern markets, and I have often seen local oranges and grapefruit for sale in southern Florida as "Indian River" fruit.

In years past the Indian River was a favorite winter resort for people from the north, and Titusville, Cocoa, Rockledge, Melbourne and many smaller towns and villages were miniature Miamis during the season. But with the construction of the great motor highways and the almost universal use of cars, the hordes of winter visitors and tourists have swept on farther south, al-



VICTORIA REGIA LILY LEAVES IN THE JUNGLE GARDENS, VERO BEACH





BRADLEY'S FAMOUS CASINO, PALM BEACH



WHEN THE PALMS BLOW OVER THEY ARE PROPPED UP AND CONTINUE  
TO GROW

though many remain here by the lovely Indian River, with its moss-draped, venerable live oaks, its glossy-leaved orange trees, its fruit and its charm, preferring the more peaceful and quiet atmosphere of the district to the noisy, mad whirl of gayety, excitement and whoopee of points farther south.

At Fort Pierce one's attention is attracted by some huge old cannon and some enormous anchors resting upon a grass plot beside the road. They are the most conspicuous objects in the little town and have a truly romantic history, for they link the present with the old days when pirates' ships with black flags at their mastheads dropped anchor off the beach, and unshaven, villainous looking scoundrels, armed to the teeth, came pulling ashore and, shouting and cursing, shooting and swinging cutlasses, fell like fiends from Hell upon the terrified Spaniards, slaying without mercy, looting and ravishing and carrying weeping women into a captivity worse than death. In those black days many a pirate ship dropped in on the settlements along the Florida coast, as did many a Dutch privateer under Admiral Heyn, and then, as nowadays, ships occasionally lost their anchors or slipped cables in order to escape from an approaching foe.

Something of this sort must have taken place just off Fort Pierce for, when digging the ship channel about six years ago, the dredge brought up the immense anchors and guns now to be seen in the public square of the town. What ship once carried them upon her decks, how they came to be there at the bottom of the sea, whether there was a wreck or a battle, no one

knows. But it would seem more than probable that a battle between pirates and Spaniards took place off shore, for some of the old relics are unquestionably of Spanish origin while others are stamped with Dutch emblems. Perchance the other remainders of the old vessels still lie there on the ocean's bed. Perhaps there may even be a great treasure scattered about on the sand far beneath the waves. In those days most large ships carried treasure in good solid gold and silver, and many a million still lies on the bottom along Florida's coasts. In several cases even the approximate location of some of these sunken treasure ships is known. One of these, of which we have authentic and historic evidence, lies not far from Palm Beach and has actually been found and examined. This was the Spanish galleon *Santa Margarita* which struck a reef and went down in 1595, carrying with her a cargo of silver bullion worth, at the present time, something over seven million dollars.

For over three centuries the wrecked galleon and her vast treasure rested, forgotten and undiscovered, on the ocean bottom almost within a stone's throw of the hundreds of bathers on the nearby beaches. And then, quite by accident, a diver, while repairing a submarine cable, came suddenly upon the rotted, shell-encrusted old hulk and, poking about, found the treasure still intact. Carefully marking the spot, he took bearings and two years later returned to salvage his treasure trove. But the jinx which ever seems to guard sunken treasures was on the watch, and scarcely was the diving boat moored above the hulk, and all was in readiness

to begin work, when a hurricane swept down upon the coast, wrecking the salvagers' vessel. Several of the crew were drowned; the diver barely escaped with his life, and, although he later attempted to recover the treasure, he never again succeeded in locating the wreck.

Another authentic sunken treasure is the five million dollars in gold coin which the United States paid to Spain to indemnify those of her subjects who suffered loss through the transfer of Florida to the United States. The gold, shipped from Washington to Pensacola in a war vessel, was there transferred to a Spanish schooner, convoyed by gunboats, to be taken to Havana. But the gold never reached Cuba. In a sudden gale—one of those northers which sweep without warning across the Gulf—the vessels became separated, and the treasure-laden schooner, straining and laboring in the heavy seas, commenced to leak badly. Despite their frantic pumping, the crew could not keep the intrushing water under control; and, realizing that his vessel would founder, the captain headed for shore, hoping to beach the schooner and thus save the millions in his hold. But she could carry a mere rag of sail, she was waterlogged and well nigh unmanageable, and the skipper was by no means certain of his location. Instead of running onto the shelving beach, the keel struck a sandbar not far from the mouth of the Suwanee River and sank in three fathoms of water. Thankful to escape alive, the shipwrecked mariners managed to reach the nearest settlements, but in their distress and the excitement they had neglected to take bearings and could not locate the sunken schooner.

For years the incident appears to have been forgotten. Then, about forty years ago, a company was formed to salvage the treasure; but it was not until 1928 that anyone claimed to have located it. In that year a salvaging expedition reported that the money chests had actually been found and seen by the divers. But as far as known the treasure was not recovered, which is inexplicable if the reported discovery was true. At all events, as far as anyone knows, the five millions in good minted gold still lie in less than twenty feet of water on the western coast of Florida.

But do not think that sunken treasures have never been recovered in Florida waters or elsewhere. As a general rule, men who find lost or hidden treasure do not shout the news from the housetops. In many lands the government claims a lion's share of all treasure-trove, and after a man has devoted his time, trouble and money—and very possibly has risked his life—seeking for treasure, he naturally has an inherent objection to sharing it with someone else. He believes that findings should be keepings, and so says nothing. At other times it may be dangerous to let the world at large know that one has a vast treasure in one's possession, while it not infrequently happens that a portion of a treasure is recovered and the lucky finders keep it a secret, hoping or planning to return and salvage the balance.

Very probably many more sunken treasures have been wrested from the sea than the records show, but now and again we hear of such successes. This was the case with the fleet of fourteen Spanish galleons which were wrecked near Cayo Largo on June 31, 1715. Only

one of the plate ships escaped and brought news of the loss of the fleet, with a vast treasure in gold and silver, on the Florida reefs. The following year wreckers and divers were sent from Spain to salvage the treasure and while at work were seen by a Jamaican vessel that happened to be in the vicinity. When word of the Spaniards' activities reached Port Royal the British at once fitted out six swift vessels, with over three hundred men, and sailed for the Florida key and the scene of salvaging. Meanwhile the Spanish divers had recovered over half a million in bullion, and this they had placed ashore with only fifty men to protect it, as they, of course, never dreamed of danger on this deserted bit of land. And when Captain Jennings, who, like his fellows, was more of a pirate than a seaman, appeared with three hundred rascals at his back, the Spaniards very sensibly decided that saving their lives was of more importance than saving the treasure, which belonged to the Spanish Crown anyway. So they promptly retreated to the bush and made no attempt to prevent the British hijackers from taking the gold and silver they had salvaged. Naturally the Spaniards felt that recovering treasure from the sunken galleons, only to have it fall into the hands of the British, was a thankless undertaking. So abandoning further work, they sailed back to Spain, leaving the fourteen galleons and the greater portion of the treasure on the bottom of the sea, where it still remains as far as anyone knows.

These are but a few of the sunken treasure ships scattered along the Florida coasts, especially on the keys, for in the days when galleons sailed the seas, un-

charted reefs, unpredicted hurricanes and unmarked shoals took heavy toll of shipping. And in those days practically every ship carried treasure in the form of coin or bullion, for checks, bank drafts and bills of exchange had not come into use, and all business was transacted with good gold and silver. Also, of course, there are many tales of treasure hidden by pirates or others on the shores of Florida, some of which are purely legendary while others are borne out by irrefutable evidence; but of that more later.

One peculiar feature of the Florida towns is the out-of-doors social center with the big shed-like pavilion in the park or plaza. This is provided with shuffle-boards, tables and chairs where the residents may while away the hours playing games or discussing local politics or world problems. It is an excellent scheme for keeping the idlers off the streets, and is the Florida prototype of the Weary Club of Norway, Maine; and throughout the day and evening the shady pavilions are well patronized by native sons and daughters who have nothing to do and seem to find doing it something of an effort. In fact the outstanding characteristic of the population, taken as a whole, is an easy-going indifference. No one appears to be really particularly interested in anything. There is no hurry or bustle, none of the go-and-get-it, live-wire activity of the North. While there is none of the anti-Yankee feeling so evident in many parts of the South, and the people are friendly enough to strangers, they make no effort to induce visitors to remain in their midst. Unquestionably this is the result of the climate

and the lack of the necessity of hustling in order to live, for the population is composed largely of immigrants from Northern and Mid-Western states who, on their native sod, could never have acquired the come-day, go-day, God-save-Sunday habit. Of course there are exceptions to the rule, and there are plenty of live business men and hard-working farmers and artizans; but, taken as a whole, the attitude of the bulk of the old-timers is that of the man who, when asked why he didn't repair his leaky roof, replied: "When it rains I can't shingle it and when it doesn't rain I don't need to." \*

But there is one pleasing feature about the Florida people, and that is the strict color line that is drawn. In many places, as at Lake Worth, no colored person is allowed to live in the town or to be seen in the town after dark, and as a result, crimes of any sort are practically nonexistent. This complete separation of colored and whites is the more striking and the more pleasing after one has resided in Nassau where there is no color line drawn and where it would be impossible to draw one, for, as an Englishman once observed: "To the British a person with one drop of white blood is white, whereas to the American a person with one drop of black blood is colored."

Also, in sharp contrast to the Bahamas and to so many of our winter resorts, the Floridians do not look upon

\* It is to be understood that these observations apply to the district of which this chapter treats and to the smaller communities. In Florida the characters of the people, as well as their antecedents, vary as greatly as the character of the country itself, while in many of the larger towns the inhabitants are as progressive, as busy and as wide awake as in any Northern cities of equal size.





THE SHOPS IN PALM BEACH LOOK LIKE SPANISH MISSIONS



ENTRANCE GATE TO A MILLIONAIRE'S HOME AT PALM BEACH

existence to Flagler and his East Coast Railway. Before the advent of the railroad Palm Beach was a waste of wind-blown sand, scrubby palmettos, tangled saw-grass and jungle, and mosquito-infested swamps. But Flagler saw its possibilities; he built the great Royal Poinciana Hotel, which is now being dismantled and torn down, and presto! Palm Beach with its palatial mansions, its miles of palm-shaded avenues, its magnificent hostelries and its unrivaled bathing beaches was evolved from the jungle and the morass.

While Palm Beach became the favorite winter home of the exclusive, the fashionable, the rich and the social lights of our country, yet the person of moderate means can enjoy the charm, the beauty, the climate and the bathing offered by Palm Beach and Lake Worth as freely as can the elite.

But, thank Heaven, Palm Beach and Lake Worth have never degenerated into the type of winter playground that one finds at Daytona, Miami and elsewhere. Although during the winter the place is filled to overflowing with visitors from the North, yet they are of a class far different from and better than those who transform Miami, Daytona and other resorts into noisy, hilarious, flamboyant infernos of riotous orgies, nudity and Bacchanalian parties. At Palm Beach and Lake Worth this sort of thing is neither welcomed nor wanted. The natives take vast pride in their locale, and their aim is to maintain the "Palm Beaches'" reputation as a select, respectable and wholly desirable spot.

Even in the town of West Palm Beach, across the lake from Palm Beach proper, there is none of the garish,

honky-tonky atmosphere that pervades so many popular resorts. There is, instead, something substantial, self-respecting and I might say almost refined about the busy little town. But it is Palm Beach proper, across the bridges that span Lake Worth, that is preëminently the show place of eastern Florida and the playground of millionaires. Everywhere are the smooth, winding, asphalt drives between walls gorgeous with bougainvillea and hedges of flaming hibiscus, and everywhere are the palms—palms of every size, form and variety—with glimpses of pastel-tinted houses, picturesque towers, pergolas and arcades between the waving fronds. Here and there is a charming vista of green lawns stretching to the water's edge, with white hulled yachts resting at anchor or alongside private piers; or formal gardens with their beds of flowering plants and fantastically clipped hedges. The whole place is like a great garden, and one has the impression of driving through private grounds rather than along public thoroughfares. Order, neatness and painstaking care are evident on every side. No litter mars the streets, the hedges and the clipped trees bordering the highways are spick and span and as meticulously trimmed as though they were within the confines of the millionaires' stone walls, and even the roadsides are beautified by borders of flowering shrubs, Spanish bayonet and other tropical plants. Not a signboard, advertisement or poster mars the beauty of the place, while the majority of the homes are of Spanish Colonial or Spanish Mission architecture perfectly in harmony with their surroundings.

Even the shops in the restricted business section and

near the railway station (branches of the most exclusive and expensive firms of New York, Paris and London) are typically Spanish for the most part and many might well be mistaken for old missions or the haciendas of Spanish grandees.

But of all the buildings at Palm Beach the most famous is a white wooden structure near the railway station. No one would ever guess that within those unpretentious wooden walls multimillionaires gamble for the highest stakes in all the world. Yet this is Bradley's, the most famed night club and casino in America; a club where the wealthy and the socially elite may dine, wine and gamble without fear of interference, for it is a tradition of Bradley's that never has it been raided or padlocked. It is also said that it is, paradoxically, the easiest and at the same time the most difficult of clubs to enter; that anyone bearing the hall marks of wealth and respectability, and wearing evening clothes, may pass through the portals without question; but that no one otherwise attired can gain admission. And there is a story current in Palm Beach, of a well-known millionaire, a member of the socially elect, who owns a princely mansion within a stone's throw of Bradley's, who laid a wager that he could enter the famous club in sports clothes. But to his chagrin he lost the bet, for the doorman, who was perfectly aware of the other's identity, refused to recognize him and politely but firmly barred his way.

Almost as famed as Bradley's, and with the added attraction of mystery surrounding it, is the palatial club at Boca Raton, twenty-five miles south of Palm Beach.

Here, beside an artificial lake (with a channel leading to the sea) wherein an ocean-going yacht may moor at its very doorstep, is the mysterious club house which, in the days of Florida's great land boom, was built as an exclusive and expensive hotel. But Boca Raton failed to boom properly; it did not grow to equal or rival Palm Beach, and the palatial hotel changed hands and became a club or casino or a palace of pleasure as one prefers. That it is frequented and maintained by the most exclusive and the wealthiest of winter residents is well known, but no one not included in the sacred inner circle knows what goes on within the ornate walls. No snooping newspaper reporter has ever yet gained entrance—or if he has he has never yet made public what he saw and heard—and the Boca Raton Club remains as famed for its secretiveness as Bradley's is famed for the fabulous stakes and princely fortunes that are won and lost on its gaming tables.



## CHAPTER V

### OSCEOLA'S PEOPLE

Fort Lauderdale. The Indian reservation. Mistaken ideas about the Seminoles. Renegades and runaways. Indians in colonial days. The mystery of a vanished race. Ancient mounds. Whom the Spaniards found. Indian wars. The Seminole War. A black page of our history. An unconquered race. The Seminoles of today.

It was at Fort Lauderdale that the final episode of the Seminole War took place nearly a century ago, and it is here that one first sees the Florida Indians, members of the Seminole tribe, whose homes are clustered about the little reservation on the outskirts of the town.

There one may see the Seminoles at home, dwelling in their open, thatched huts, living very much as did their ancestors a century and more ago, and as the bulk of the tribe still live in the remote villages at Big Cypress, and earning an easy if rather precarious existence by selling Indian dolls, beadwork, curios and live alligators to passing tourists and visitors and by hunting and fishing. They are a picturesque lot, the women dressed in their tribal costume of bright colored skirts and capes made of innumerable small pieces of gay calico arranged in a patchwork of geometrical and pleasing designs, and with vast mounds of beads piled high about their necks to form pyramids reaching from shoulders to chin; the men, as a rule; garbed in cheap trousers or overalls but

still adhering to the tribal blouse of gaudy-hued patchwork.

Like semicivilized Indians elsewhere, their cleanliness leaves much to be desired and, aside from the conversation necessary in bartering, they are a silent, rather surly lot in the presence of strangers. But one cannot blame them for being suspicious and aloof in dealing with the white race, for ill treatment, persecution, robbery, depravity, slaughter and deception are all they have ever received from white men in the past. Yet through four centuries of abuse, slave raids, warfare, murder, rapine, trickery, persecution and the most shameful and inhuman treatment, the Florida Indians have managed to survive, to retain their own customs, language, ceremonies and tribal life, their own laws and chiefs, and their independence.

Never have they admitted defeat or conquest, and it is only within the past year or two that they have recognized the sovereignty of the United States or have accepted aid or protection from Uncle Sam. Then the encroachment of white settlers, the reclamation of the Everglades, the failure of crops and losses of cattle, the inroads of disease and other misfortunes forced some of the Indian bands to appeal to the government, and today the Indian Bureau maintains reservations, schools, commissaries and the inevitable missions at various localities in Florida. But the greater number of the aborigines still dwell in their native villages in the depths of the Everglades and Big Cypress, scorning the innovations of the white men and living as did the tribesmen in the days of Ponce de León and Hernando de Soto.

It has become customary to refer to all Florida Indians as Seminoles, and the average person, if he gives the matter any thought whatsoever, is under the impression that the Seminoles were the only Florida red men, that no other tribe inhabited the peninsula, and that all the Florida Indian wars were with the Seminoles. As a matter of fact, when the Europeans first settled in what is now Florida they found the country inhabited by scores of tribes, varying greatly in appearance, in language, in customs and beliefs, and as a rule in a constant state of warfare with one another. But of all these various tribes and sub-tribes only the Creeks and the Seminoles remain, and oddly enough the Seminoles were not one of the original tribes.

For that matter they are not, strictly and ethnologically speaking, a true tribe but a mixture, for the word Seminole, properly pronounced Seminolay, means a renegade or runaway in the Creek language, and was applied to the bands of Indians composed of members of various tribes who, for one reason or another, became renegades. In many cases also, runaway slaves joined the Seminole bands, and in time their numbers increased until they formed a confederation or tribe quite apart from their Creek, Mickosuke, Muscogee, Apalache and Yamassee ancestors. As it was quite natural that they should be regarded with something of contempt by the neighboring tribes who referred to them as "The dirty Creeks," even when the speakers were pure Creek Indians, they were on far from friendly terms with their neighbors and became more and more widely separated from their original tribes. Also, having no recognized



tribal territory, they took up their abode in the almost impenetrable fastnesses of the Everglades and, thus isolated, they developed customs, a mode of life, even a costume all their own. Like all their fellow tribesmen of Florida they were valiant, courageous fighters and as it was practically impossible for their enemies, white or red, to attack them on their own ground and raid their villages, the Seminoles survived when other tribes were exterminated. Thus by a turn of the wheel of Fate, the one-time renegades became the dominant ruling Indians of all Florida, although not known or recognized as a tribe until the middle of the eighteenth century.

When the Spaniards first arrived in Florida they found the country fairly well populated by Indians; but, just as the Dons exaggerated everything else they saw or heard of in the New World, so they grossly exaggerated the numbers of the aborigines and drew very largely upon their Latin imaginations in their descriptions of the tribal ceremonies, riches and customs. Moreover, they were forced to depend upon Indian interpreters for communication with the natives, and anyone who has had much experience in dealing with primitive tribes knows how little faith can be placed in what an interpreter says. Intentionally or unintentionally he is prone to embroider the facts with fancy which will add to the luster of his fellows, and in addition it is an almost invariable habit of Indians to say what they feel will be pleasing to strangers, as long as the strangers are regarded as friends. Finally, there was as always a deal of confusion in regard to the various tribes and



*From the painting by Catlin*

OSCEOLA



their chiefs; in the various dialects the names of tribes varied; the Spaniards in their efforts to convey the sounds of Indian words in their own language often spelled the same Indian word half a dozen different ways, and it not infrequently happened that the name of a place, village, chief or object was mistaken for the name of a tribe or vice versa. Hence we cannot place too much reliance on the records and descriptions of the Florida Indians as left to us by the earlier Spanish explorers.

In fact the Spaniards flatly contradicted themselves on more than one occasion. As an example, in one description of the Florida savages they speak of them as cannibals and declare that the "breasts of young maidens" were deemed special delicacies and were reserved for the delectation of the chiefs, yet in another instance they state that only in Peru and Florida was cannibalism unknown. However, if we examine the many contemporary records and descriptions we find certain points on which the old Dons agreed, and we can thus obtain a fairly accurate idea of the aborigines whom the Spaniards found. Judging by these the Florida Indians appear to have been more closely affiliated with the South American or Mexican races than with the North American stock.

The custom, according to the Spaniards, of flaying their enemies alive and drying their skins as trophies was very similar to customs in vogue among the Mexicans, while their habit of drinking "Cassine" or "Cassiri," a beverage made from sweet potatoes, is still part of all ceremonies among the tribes of northern

South America. Even the manner in which they wore their hair—gathered and tied in a knot at the top of the head, is more South than North American, as also the type of feather crowns worn, the feather bobs hanging down their backs, the ear and lip plugs, and the elaborate tattooing or painting, all of which are shown on drawings made by contemporary artists which are probably fairly accurate in details.

On the other hand, the Dons considered all the territory from the Atlantic to Mexico as Florida, and their descriptions of the Indians may have been largely of the tribes inhabiting the southwestern portion of the continent rather than the peninsula of Florida proper. In fact, the detailed and glowing description of an Indian temple seen by the Spaniards under de Soto and mentioned in a foregoing chapter, reads suspiciously like descriptions of so-called temples seen by the Spaniards in Central America and Peru; while the Indians—and more especially the Indian queen—who possessed such vast quantities of pearls were far more probably in what is now Alabama and Mississippi than in Florida. Although there are plenty of fresh water mussels in the Florida lakes and streams no pearl fishery has yet proved a success, and very few pearls or even pearl mussel shells used as ornaments have been found in Indian mounds or graves, whereas great quantities have been taken from the burial mounds of the Gulf States and the Mississippi valley.

The first mention and descriptions of the Florida Indians on which we can rely are those left us by Ribault and Laudonnière, and these apply almost wholly

to the tribes of northeastern Florida. Yet even these accounts of the Frenchmen must be taken with some reservations for Le Moyne, who was an excellent artist and a member of Laudonnière's company, in his portrait of Chief Satouriona, shows the Indian with *talons* instead of nails on his toes! But as Laudonnière and his Huguenots lived in amity with the Indians and dealt with them constantly, we may be reasonably certain that his statements in the main are correct. Thus he states that there were three distinct confederacies of Indians in northern Florida, that Satouriona was the chief or king of one, Potaou the chief of another, and Outina chief of the third. Also, his descriptions of the Indians' customs and appearance are more what might be expected, for he mentions that they all had many traits in common, that they took the scalps of their enemies, that the priests or medicine men had great influence in their councils, that heredity was through the female line, and that the arrows were tipped with fish bone.

On the other hand, he states that the chiefs were carried in litters or chairs borne by four men, with musicians playing on flutes marching ahead—a custom typical of the Mexican, Central American and Peruvian Indians, but unknown elsewhere in America.

In short, what we actually know of the Indians of Florida three or four centuries ago amounts to little. Many of the tribes mentioned by the earlier voyagers and settlers—the Thimagoas, Caloosas and others—must have been completely wiped out quite early in the game, for there is no reference to them in later records. This, however, is not surprising when we stop to con-

sider that for two centuries and more the Indians were slaughtered like wild beasts and were enslaved by the Spaniards, and that hundreds of them were kidnaped and shipped to plantations and mines in the West Indies and elsewhere. The marvel is that any survived, that, as in the case of the Lucayans of the Bahamas, they were not completely wiped from the earth in a few short years.

But the Florida redmen were of very different mettle from the gentle, peaceful aborigines of the Bahamas. Very quickly they realized that the white men were not the gods nor the friends they had thought them at first, and thereafter they fought ferociously and desperately to retain their homes, their freedom and their lives; and the fact that any survived until the present time, that they successfully resisted complete conquest and annihilation by Spaniards, French, British and Americans, speaks volumes for their prowess, their fighting spirit and their skill in warfare. The more so when we realize the terrific odds against them.

Although the Spaniards speak of them as though there were teeming thousands of warriors in Florida, their estimates or rather their statements as to numbers were unquestionably vastly exaggerated, partly through ignorance in mistaking the same parties of warriors met again and again as distinct bands; partly through the heavy losses they sustained which the armor-clad Dons could account for only by assuming that there were far more Indians than there were in reality; and mainly in order to belittle the prowess and the triumphs of the

savages and to make their own successes appear more glorious.

It was the same wherever the white men fought the Indians. During the French and Indian wars in New England it was not unusual for the settlers to declare they had been attacked by more warriors than could have been mustered by all the tribes together. In Virginia, Powhatan's braves were referred to by Captain John Smith and others as though they numbered thousands, although the confederacy could not have mustered three hundred warriors all told. So when we read of De Soto battling with "thousands" of savages we can quite safely divide his estimate of numbers by ten and be near the truth. Even if we accept Fontenada's estimate of two thousand Indians living in southern Florida in 1570, there would not have been over four hundred warriors at the most, for one warrior to every five Indians is a high average.

The great pity is that there were no scientists among the Spanish and French adventurers who visited Florida in those days. Had there been a Dampier, a Wafer, even a Ringrose, we should now have fairly accurate accounts of the Florida Indians and their dialects, customs and characteristics; for those tough old buccaneers were keen observers, they were deeply interested in the fauna, the flora and the inhabitants of the countries they visited, and they found time and opportunity between battles and raids and piratical forays to record what they had seen and learned.

But the Spaniards were interested in the Indians only



as slaves and as converts to Christianity. To their minds the Indians' customs, beliefs, ceremonies and practices were actuated by Satan himself and were to be stamped out and utterly destroyed; and the Indian who refused to submit to having his cherished and sacred beliefs and revered customs destroyed, and who failed to bow to the mandates of Spanish conqueror and Spanish priest, was deemed a soulless infidel to be put to death or forced into slavery like a dumb beast.

So, when all is said and done, we know less about the former Indian inhabitants of Florida than about those who occupied any other portion of our eastern states. Who they were, whence they came, their relationships and affinities, all are questions that are shrouded in mystery. But there is reason to believe that the original inhabitants of Florida were wholly distinct from the Indians of more recent times, for in the numerous mounds which abound in Florida archæologists have found evidence that the Creeks, Alabamas, Yamassees and other tribes of Algonquin, Siouxian or Athabascan stock were comparatively recent arrivals, and that long before their day people with a distinct culture, of a distinct race, inhabited the peninsula. Who they were we cannot even guess as yet, but it would not be so very surprising if eventually we discover that Florida was originally populated by people from Yucatan, Mexico, Central America or even from the South American continent.

Wherever we turn we are faced with mysteries and inexplicable facts in regard to the Florida Indians. From

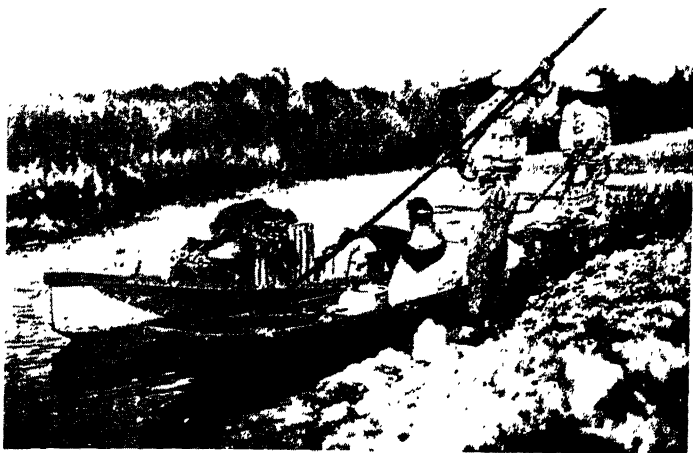
what source did they derive their blowguns and poisoned arrows—weapons typically South American? What was the origin of their unusual costumes? Whence came the turban-like headdress, the knee-length tunic, the cape, the garters and the three metal or bone breast ornaments of the natives so clearly shown on Catlin's famous portrait of Osceola? Only the Incan and pre-Incan races of Peru and the Indians of Florida wore such a costume, and, minus the gun, the powder horn and the moccasins, the portrait of Osceola might be that of one of the Incas. For that matter how did the Seminoles evolve or design the costume they wear today and have always worn?

I have disinterred mummies from ancient graves in Peru which were arrayed in costumes so like those of the Seminoles that they might well have been brought direct from the Indian villages in the Everglades. There were the same full capes, long skirts and mounds of beads that the Seminole women wear, bearing the same patterns in woven cloth of the same colors; and on the mummified bodies of the men were the same loose tunics, the same kilt-like skirts, the same turban-like headdresses, with the same type of plumes, while resting on the shrunken chests were three copper, silver or golden plates of crescent form exactly like those depicted on the breast of Osceola. Yet who would have the temerity to assert that the Florida Indians were descended from the Incan tribes, and that the very style and pattern of costumes worn by Peruvian ancestors two thousand or more years ago had been handed down

from generation to generation until the present day?

No, it is just another of those fascinating if exasperating mysteries which constantly crop up to confound us when we attempt to solve the riddle of the origin of man in America.

But there is no mystery as to the origin of the Indian wars in Florida, especially the so-called Seminole War. Rather is it altogether too plain, because it is written on a page of our history which we cannot destroy or paste down, a page of which we should be thoroughly ashamed, for it records one of the most shameful episodes of all our shameful dealings with the Indians, even though the Indians were, ethically, the victors. Moreover, it was a war of which we could not be proud even had it been waged for a worthy and righteous cause, for our best generals and our entire army were out-maneuvered, out-generaled and ignominiously defeated time and time again by a handful of Indians. And, considering the results obtained, it proved our most expensive war, for it cost us over two thousand men and twenty millions of dollars and lasted for seven years, while countless civilians were sacrificed and incalculable losses in buildings, agriculture, cattle and other industries were sustained. The only tangible result of these losses in money, property and human lives was the capture of twenty dugout canoes and fifty Indians, for the purpose of the war was never accomplished; the Seminoles were never conquered, and our government was compelled to resort to trickery, deception and falsehoods in order to take prisoner the greatest leader in all the annals of our Indian wars—Osceola.



*Photo by G. W. Romer*

#### SEMINOLE INDIANS ON THE MOVE



*Photo by G. W. Romer*

#### SEMINOLE INDIANS AT HOME



Although the Seminoles and Creeks had always been on friendly terms with the British and Americans, and had proved valuable allies during periods of hostilities with Spain, yet scarcely had Florida been ceded to the United States when mistreatment of the Indians commenced. Settlers and speculators robbed them of lands and cattle and shot them down when they protested. Their villages were burned, their women violated, their crops seized or destroyed, and they were driven farther and farther from their ancestral homes and the fields that had been tilled by their tribes for centuries. In the eyes of the white men the Indians had no rights; they were vermin to be stamped out like the rattlesnakes and moccasins; and, although there was land and to spare for all, the avaricious, greedy whites preferred to take forcible possession of the Indians lands rather than to clear and drain land for themselves.

For a time the Indians, offering little resistance, sullenly, silently retreated deeper and deeper into the fastnesses of the Everglades; but the encroaching settlers and planters were not satisfied. The Indians must go, and orders went forth that the Indians should be deported from their native Florida and placed on a reservation in the west. Had the government authorities possessed the slightest knowledge of the Indians and conditions, they would have known that such action would not only result in hostilities but, if carried out, would mean the annihilation of the Florida tribes, for to transplant to arid plains a race accustomed and acclimated to the Florida swamps would be to sign their death warrants.

But even then the Indians remained passive, only demanding that before they agreed to move they should send members of their tribe to inspect their proposed homes in the west. Only a few of these scouts returned. Some were killed by the Pawnees, others succumbed to a change of climate and environment, and those who found their way back to Florida brought dismal reports. There were no Everglades and waterways in the west, no pitch pine for the Indians' fires and torches and, worst of all, their nearest neighbors would be tribes who were their deadliest enemies.

Even in the face of these discouraging reports the cooler headed chiefs were inclined to sign a treaty with the government agreeing to the deportation, and doubtless it would have been carried out had it not been for an incident which brought the delicate situation to a dramatic climax and resulted in seven years of bitter and destructive warfare. White raiders kidnaped the beloved wife of a young Seminole named Osceola. Enraged by this crime, Osceola, instead of taking the law into his own hands and wreaking vengeance on the abductors, hurried to Fort King and demanded justice from General Thompson. But instead of listening to the wronged Indian's protests, General Thompson ordered Osceola arrested and thrown into prison, heavily chained. To be sure, his imprisonment did not last long, but the injustices, the indignities and the wrongs that he had received had burned deep into Osceola's heart; and from that day on his one overwhelming passion was revenge, his one sentiment undying, bitter hatred of every white man. And no sooner

was he liberated than he bent all his energies toward vengeance and reprisals.

Among the various leaders who were in favor of moving to the west was the Mickosukee chief, Charley Emathla. Having disposed of his cattle, Emathla, with his family and tribe, was preparing to leave the country when Osceola appeared, upbraided the Mickosukee for a traitor and a renegade and killed him on the spot.

As a result of Osceola's action many of the Indian chiefs, who had been inclined toward peaceful evacuation of their territory, began to question the wisdom of so doing. Among these leaders was Chief Micanopy, and when the various chiefs met General Thompson for a final pow-wow, Micanopy had Osceola at his elbow as an adviser.

Seeing that the Indians hesitated to sign the treaty, General Thompson began to threaten, declaring that if they did not sign immediately all aid and protection from the government would be withdrawn and the Indians regarded as outlaws to be shot on sight. At this Osceola leaped up, whipped out his hunting knife and driving it through the treaty spread upon the desk, he exclaimed: "This is the only treaty we will ever make with the white men!"

Osceola's dramatic defiance of the United States government, as represented by General Thompson, marked the beginning of the Seminole War. Everywhere the Indians were in revolt and, on the twenty-eighth of December, Osceola appeared unexpectedly at Fort King and killed General Thompson and Lieutenant Smith, his secretary, thus avenging himself for the



brutal and unjust treatment he had received at the General's hands. On the same day the so-called Dade massacre took place. And in this connection it is worthy of comment, as illustrating our attitude toward the Indians, that whenever the Indians won a battle it was a "massacre," whereas on the occasions when our troops won the day, and slaughtered Indian men, women and children, it was deemed a brilliant and glorious "victory." Had Major Dade's command succeeded in its objective, and surprising an Indian village razed it to the ground and shot down its helpless women and children without mercy, a decisive victory would have been recorded and the Major would have been honored for his brilliant coup. But because the Indians outwitted and destroyed the troops sent to kill them their action has gone down in history as a "massacre."

With one hundred and ten United States regulars, Major Dade marched from Fort Brooke (now Tampa) bound for Fort King (now Ocala) where he was to join General Clinch and thence proceed to wipe out the Seminoles of the district. Scarcely had the force crossed the Withlacoochee River when guns flashed and roared from the surrounding jungle, the ambushed men fell dead and wounded on every side, and a shot from Micanopy killed Major Dade. Surprised, terrified, unable to return the fire of their invisible foes effectively, one hundred and eight members of the troop fell dead or mortally wounded. Only two men escaped, one Private Clark of the second artillery, the other private Thomas. Clark escaped by feigning death among the bodies of his comrades, and after the departure of the

Indians crawled, wounded as he was, for sixty miles to Fort Brooke and reported the tragedy. Thomas, almost dead, was found by an Indian who had been a personal friend, and by his help the white soldier succeeded in reaching Fort Brooke in safety.

It was fortunate for Clarke and Thomas that the Seminoles were not taking scalps and did not strip the bodies of their foes. They were fighting for their homes and for justice, not for trophies or loot, and aside from taking possession of the arms and ammunition of the men they had killed they left the bodies undisturbed. But scarcely had the Indians vanished from the scene when a party of Negroes appeared, and, brutally butchering the few wounded men still alive, they stripped the bodies of everything they desired.

This signal defeat of United States regulars under brilliant officers by a mere handful of Indians—the Seminoles never had over one thousand warriors under arms throughout all Florida, whereas the government had 18,000—was the first real engagement of the war, and awakened the United States to a realization that the Seminoles were in deadly earnest, that they were enemies to be reckoned with and were not merely turbulent malcontents to be easily rounded up by a few soldiers.

Although skirmishes and engagements between troops and Indians followed in rapid succession, yet none were of a serious nature, and losses on both sides were inconsequential until December 25, 1837, when Colonel Zachary Taylor, with two thousand men, marched for an attack on the Indians encamped at the northern end

of Lake Okeechobee. The battle began on Christmas morning and lasted until late in the afternoon. When the Indians at last withdrew, Colonel Gentry and twenty-six men had been killed and over one hundred wounded, while the Indians' losses had been but ten men.

In several engagements that followed, the Indians lost heavily, however, and a number of the chiefs expressed a willingness to sign a treaty of peace. So certain did the government feel that the war was over that a large portion of the troops were withdrawn from Florida. But they had reckoned without Osceola. By his personality, his eloquence and his influence he won King Philip, Con Hadjo, Micanopy and the other chiefs to his side, and with seven hundred warriors vanished in the Everglades. No attempt to renew hostilities was made; the Seminoles were weary of war and merely wished to be left alone, but consternation reigned among the whites, and volunteers were called for. There were few regulars in Florida; these were scattered among the various outlying forts; and the Creek allies of the whites had been disbanded. Then, while frantic efforts were being made to muster a force large enough to resist the expected attack by the Indians, Osceola, with a few men under a flag of truce, appeared at St. Augustine and requested a conference with General Hernandez.

The meeting was arranged for October 22, and was to be held at Three Pines, about seven miles from the city. All unsuspecting treachery, Osceola reached the appointed spot and was at once seized, heavily manacled and carried a prisoner to St. Augustine. Later he was

sent to Fort Moultrie in South Carolina where he and over two hundred captives, including women and children, were imprisoned in cells and dungeons. Their death warrants were thus signed and within the year Osceola died.

But the famous Indian's imprisonment and death did not end the war. Coacoochee (the Wild Cat), son of Chief Philip, and Talmus Hadjo, while visiting the former's sick father near St. Augustine, were taken prisoners and cast into a cell in Fort Marion. But with Indian fortitude they managed to starve themselves until able to squeeze their emaciated bodies between the bars and thus escaped. Subsisting on roots and berries, hunted by their white foes, suffering untold hardships, the two Indians managed to elude their pursuers and eventually joined their tribesmen on the Tomoka River. Bitter at the treatment he had received, deadly hatred of the whites was aroused in the breast of Coacoochee, and once more the Seminoles were on the war path.

This time the Indians took the aggressive. A stage was held up between St. Augustine and Picolata and its occupants robbed and killed. The same fate befell a United States Army wagon, and the Indians carried their warfare to the very gates of St. Augustine. For four years and more the little band of Seminoles held the city in a state of siege and kept all of northern Florida in constant terror. Not until Coacoochee was captured in 1842 did the people breathe freely once more; and the Seminole War at last came to an end when twenty canoes with fifty Indians were captured at

Fort Lauderdale, the greatest and only real "victory" of the United States during seven years.

Yet the Seminoles never admitted defeat. They had fought for the right to retain their ancestral lands, to dwell unmolested in their own way in the Everglades, and while some of their members had been removed to western reservations, while some had died in prisons or had fallen in battle, the majority still remained in possession of their Everglade homes where they still dwell. While technically still at war with the United States—for no peace treaty has ever been signed—they live at amity with their white neighbors, their former hatred and ill treatment forgotten; passive, aloof, tenaciously adhering to their tribal customs, their tribal life, their tribal ceremonies. Once annually they hold their Sun Dance, cannily profiting thereby by making it a spectacle to attract the whites.

They are still bravely, doggedly fighting for existence, battling against the inroads of civilization, the white men's diseases, the white men's rum, which surely but slowly are taking toll. Today only a few hundred members of the tribe remain, and at the present rate of mortality it will be but a few years ere the last of the Florida Indians vanishes from the earth.

But their gallant struggle for their rights and for justice will never be forgotten nor will their most noted champion, Osceola, who while never a chief was perhaps the greatest leader, the most illustrious warrior that the Indian race has ever produced. Despite their fear and bitter hatred, even the whites were forced to admire his courage, his patriotism, his genius and his

devotion to his people's cause. His name and fame have been perpetuated in four counties in as many states, in addition to countless towns, cities, streets and parks, named after him, and in St. Augustine are life-sized statues of the famous warrior, together with his wife



and child, while a stone pillar at Fort Moultrie bears the inscription:

OSCEOLA  
PATRIOT AND WARRIOR  
Died at Fort Moultrie  
Jan. 30th. 1838

His grave within the confines of the fort where he was imprisoned and died is surrounded with an iron railing and is marked by a marble slab inscribed as follows:

OSCEOLA  
CHIEF OF THE TRIBE OF  
THE SEMINOLE INDIANS.

Born in Florida, 1804.

Yet the body of this warrior, revered by the Indians, admired and honored by his white enemies, was not safe from vandals. Three days after he had been interred with military honors his grave was violated, his head severed from the body, and for several years the gruesome relic was exhibited in a museum in St. Augustine. No one knows what ultimately became of Osceola's severed head, but his features are forever preserved in a death mask in the old fort at St. Augustine, while the treaty through which Osceola dramatically drove the point of his knife, and thus declared war on the United States, may still be seen in the archives at Washington, its leaves pierced by the Indian's knife blade. Even the desk on which the treaty was spread is still in existence, its surface marred by Osceola's blade and stained by the ink upset by the infuriated Indian. It was exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933 and is now in the possession of Mr. Frederick W. Dau.

Neither is there any speculation, any guesswork, any confusion of records to create uncertainty as to Osceola's personal appearance. While a prisoner at Fort Moultrie he was visited by Catlin, the famous painter of Indians, who induced the warrior to pose, arrayed in full war dress, for a full-length portrait. The portrait, still preserved, is undoubtedly an accurate likeness, for Catlin recorded that: "I painted him precisely in the costume

in which he stood for his picture, even to a string and a trinket."

Although the Seminole War ended with the capture of a handful of noncombatants at Fort Lauderdale, there were sporadic cases of Indian outrages for several years. Mostly these were committed by the so-called "Spanish Indians" of extreme southern Florida. Renegades, and of mixed Indian and Negro blood, these semi-savages were more bandits than Indians and had no support from the true Seminoles, who regarded them as outlaws and desperadoes.

Their first known victim was Captain Walton, keeper of the Carysfoot Lighthouse; but for years prior to this they had been known to have murdered shipwrecked sailors as well as the smugglers who frequented this remote section of the coast. Another victim was Doctor Henry Perrine who owned a large area of land south of Miami but who lived on Indian Key with his family. Without warning they were attacked by a band of the Spanish Indians and the Doctor was murdered although his family escaped death by hiding in a rock cellar. Two days after the tragedy they were found and rescued by the crew of a government ship and carried to safety in the northern settlements. At another time some of these same desperadoes attacked the lighthouse at Cape Florida and killed one of the two keepers. The other man concealed himself on the steel platform of the tower, which became an oven when the Indians set fire to the woodwork below. Although nearly roasted to death and half suffocated, the keeper managed to sur-



vive, and a few days later a rescuing party arrived on the scene. Unable to reach the ground with the stairway burned, the poor fellow was marooned high in air. But by means of a kite a line was carried to him, a rope was hauled up and the sole survivor of the raid was brought safely to the ground more dead than alive, although he ultimately recovered. During the Spanish-American War the brick tower which resisted the flames was used as a signal station and was occupied by the Naval Militia for some time. But it was abandoned as a light-house and stands deserted beside the sea today, a monument to the last of the Indians' hostilities in Florida.



## CHAPTER VI

### THROUGH THE EVERGLADES AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

From trackless jungles to smiling farms. Canals and their problem. A stupendous undertaking. Floods and fires. Jack's bean stalk. Indian mounds. Outlaws and bandits. Queen of the Everglades. Battle of Okeechobee. The Lake District. Flamingoes. Historic sites. The Singing Tower. Natural wonders. Silver Springs. The Devil's Millhopper.

THE mention of Everglades conjures visions of vast, impenetrable morasses, overgrown with sawgrass and jungle; with immense cypresses draped with Spanish moss; threaded by dark tortuous waterways swarming with alligators; with rattlesnakes and moccasins lurking on hummocks and slimy logs; with egrets and herons, ibis and spoonbills nesting in the trees; the haunt of wild beasts, of panther and deer; and inhabited by Indians who navigate the maze of creeks and swamps in dugout canoes.

Until a few short years ago such a mental picture of the Everglades was very near the truth; for until quite recently the "Glades," as they are called in Florida, were largely unexplored, untraversed save by the Seminoles, and were deemed worthless other than as hunting grounds. Even Lake Okeechobee was a rather mysterious, little known body of water, and a white man who had gazed upon its vast shallow expanse or had navigated its waters in an Indian's canoe felt, quite properly, that he had been on a real adventure.

But today a large part of the northern section of the Glades has been drained, cleared and converted into rich agricultural land dotted with prosperous farms and truck gardens and traversed by well-kept roads. Today Lake Okeechobee may be reached by railway or by motor car from West Palm Beach in two hours, and all about the strange lake one sees farmhouses and villages with well-tilled fields of vegetables and orchards of orange and grapefruit trees, limes and mangoes.

This, however, is but a small portion of the Everglades, which have an area of over 7000 square miles, and the greater part still remains an almost impenetrable morass of sawgrass, cypress swamps and savannas, tenanted by beasts and birds and the few hundred survivors of the Seminole Indians.

Less than a century ago, Lake Okeechobee was regarded as largely mythical and on the existent maps it was indicated as the source of the St Johns River. Not until the Seminole War had white men ever ventured within the mysterious Everglades, and it was from the troops who, in their campaign against the Indians, were forced to penetrate certain sections of the vast morass, that the first real information regarding the Glades was obtained. As a result of the War Department reports, the Secretary of the U. S. Treasury appointed Mr. Buckingham Smith to prepare a complete report on the Glades, and it was this report which pointed out that the area might be reclaimed by proper drainage canals and by deepening the creeks and rivers flowing to the coasts. Yet it was not until 1907 that any active work was commenced and the "Everglades Drainage" became

the principal topic of conversation, discussion and politics of Florida.

Unfortunately, however, instead of following out Buckingham Smith's suggestions, the State undertook to drain the Everglades by digging straight ditches or canals, irrespective of natural outlets, and apparently utterly regardless of the fact that much of the Everglades, as well as Lake Okeechobee, is many feet below sea level. As one writer put it: "Lake Okeechobee appears to need protection from the Everglades, as in all heavy rains the water running into the canals makes its way into the lake and not into the ocean. The only hope of gravity drainage would be to raise Lake Okeechobee three hundred feet or lower the Atlantic proportionately!" \*

As a result of the impossibility of this solution of the problem, the millions of dollars already expended on the Everglades drainage system have been largely thrown away.† While certain sections are now used for farm lands, whenever there are excessive or prolonged rains the farms are flooded, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of crops are ruined, and, on some occasions, as during the hurricane of 1926, scores, in fact hundreds, of lives have been lost by floods about Lake Okeechobee. Yet despite these dangers and shortcomings the production of vegetables and fruit on the Everglades soil has been enormous and most profitable, and Palm

\* Frederick W. Dau in *Florida Old and New*.

† At the present time (Oct., 1934) a large government dredge is at work constructing levees about the shores of Lake Okeechobee. Possibly this may prevent the lake from overflowing and may solve the problem of the flooded Everglades.

Beach County leads the entire state in peas, lima and string beans and other vegetables.

There is another and even greater danger that ever threatens the Everglades farms. That is fire. Not forest or grass fires, but fires which burn the soil itself, for the rich black "earth" of the Glades is composed almost wholly of vegetable matter or peat.

The casual observer, seeing the Everglades farm lands for the first time, is usually impressed by the apparent richness of this soil. And rich it is—in places. Jack's famous bean stalk had nothing on fruits and vegetables planted in certain sections of the reclaimed Glades. Bananas can almost be seen to grow, and they bear in six months. Sugar cane grows into gigantic stalks, and even when planted in rows ten feet apart forms a jungle impossible to enter without hewing a way. Cotton ripens its bolls two to three months ahead of time, while palm nuts, which normally require two to three months to sprout, thrust leaves upward through the soil in two weeks. Pumpkins have been known to attain a weight of sixty pounds within twenty-five days from planting the seed! Beans and peanuts sprout and break the soil in forty-eight hours! Tomatoes bear a dozen or more fruits on a single stem and yield 400 crates to the acre. Cabbages grow so rapidly that the heads actually burst open. Mulberry trees bear fruit within two months from the time the cuttings are set out.

The same is true of flowers. Traveling across the Everglades, one sees acres of flaming cannas, all being the riotous overflow from a few planted for ornament. So rapidly did these gorgeous plants spread and in-



BOK SINGING TOWER, MOUNTAIN LAKE SANCTUARY, LAKE WALES



crease that they threatened to take complete possession of the land, and have proved a real menace to the farmers. The same holds true of the lovely water hyacinths which choke the drainage ditches and canals, interrupt or damn the flow of streams, and grow to gigantic size, forming seemingly solid masses completely covering the waterways.

But the Everglades soil is terribly "spotty," as is all Florida soil, and results which may be obtained in one place may be entirely lacking a few miles distant. Also, much of the best land is subject to flooding, and at any time, in a few hours, groves of avocados or other trees or fields of vegetables may be utterly destroyed by a heavy rainfall. So, taken all in all, farming on the reclaimed Everglades is not all beer and skittles, as the saying goes.

But if the canals were not altogether a success in serving the purpose for which they were intended, they served another and very useful purpose to perfection, for the muck and sand dredged up was used for roadbeds. As a result, the roads over which one may motor through the Everglades follow the courses of the drainage canals and ditches. This adds greatly to a trip across the Glades for, as a whole, the scenery is most monotonous and uninteresting, and only along the canals, and about the lake, is there anything worth while to be seen. Many persons mentally picture the Everglades as tropical jungles, a tangled labyrinth of brush, vines and great trees. Instead, the Everglades are mainly vast areas of sawgrass broken by mound-like islands or "hammocks" covered with palmettos and pine trees, with



here and there broad grassy savannas and salt meadows. About the edges are dense cypress swamps and a fringe of tangled thorny shrubs and, in some places, impenetrable mangrove swamps. But along the streams and the canals, and especially about Lake Okeechobee, there is a wealth of tropical verdure and brilliant flowers. Ferns grow in luxuriant profusion, air plants and orchids cover the dead trees, and the so-called "custard apple belt" about Lake Okeechobee is a botanical fairyland, although, more's the pity, the greater portion of it has been destroyed by fires, clearings and agriculture.

It is in these areas also that one catches glimpses of the Florida wild life. Alligators bask on logs and the muddy banks; herons and egrets stand in the shoal water; cardinals and mockingbirds carol from the trees and bushes; red-bellied woodpeckers or "chabs" beat resounding tattoos on weather-beaten stumps; immense flocks of reed birds (our own familiar bobolinks unrecognizable in their drab winter coats) rise from the grass swales; ground doves and mourning doves flutter from the roadside; swallow-tailed kites wheel overhead, and hosts of small birds chirp and twitter in the shrubbery. Sometimes one may catch a fleeting glimpse of a fox or raccoon. Coiled on some fallen tree beside a ditch a great moccasin snake may be seen basking in the sun, and more than once I have seen a big diamond-back rattler glide across the roadway, his handsomely marked body shimmering in the brilliant sunlight. Also, in the dryer sections, one may sometimes surprise a huge gopher turtle foraging at some distance from its burrow.

Big lumbering beasts that they are, these Florida gophers resemble the giant land turtles of the Galapagos Islands. But try and capture one! You will find that the time-honored fable of the hare and the tortoise holds no moral when applied to the Florida gopher turtles, for even if these big burrowing tortoises cannot outrun a hare they can outrun the average man in a sprint for the safety of their holes. To be sure, if placed in the open with no burrow near, they may be overtaken by a man afoot, but I defy any ordinary human being to catch a gopher turtle if the creature has a fifty foot start and is within two hundred feet of its burrow. And digging out a woodchuck is a simple matter compared to digging out a Florida gopher turtle once it has vanished in its hole. In some sections they are still abundant and cause no little damage to farms and gardens, for they are strictly vegetarian in their diet, but as they are highly esteemed for culinary purposes they have been practically exterminated in many localities. Recently, too, a new use has been discovered for the big tortoises. Children have found that they make excellent draft animals for toy carts, and it is a not unusual sight to see one of the big tortoises harnessed to a child's express wagon and hauling a load of shouting hilarious youngsters at a fairly good pace.

Quite aside from their fauna and flora and their other interesting features, the Everglades possess many peculiarities. One might quite reasonably expect that such a vast swampy and flooded area would be swarming with mosquitoes and a hotbed of malaria. But, on the contrary, there are fewer mosquitoes in the Glades than on

the coasts, and malaria is not so prevalent as in other sections of the state. No doubt this is due to the fact that the water fairly teems with minnows which feed almost exclusively on mosquito larvae, and with thousands of frogs which devour vast quantities of insects and in turn are devoured in vast numbers by the local inhabitants and epicurean visitors to Florida.

But perhaps the most remarkable peculiarity of the Everglades is the fact that the temperature of the Glades is much below that of the coastal areas. Although there is little appreciable difference during the daytime, the nights are ten to twelve degrees cooler in the Everglades than along the sea coast. But despite the comfort of these cool nights they are a distinct disadvantage to the farmers, for the difference in temperature results in frosts in the Everglades when there are none on the coast for over a hundred miles farther north, and a cold wave with temperature at 40° F. at Indian River may result in a temperature of 28° F. in the Glades, a "freeze" that will destroy vast quantities of vegetables and fruits.

During the "dry" period of national prohibition, the Everglades proved a veritable godsend to a small army of gentlemen engaged in the somewhat risky but highly remunerative game of rum-running. Swift airplanes, laden to the limit with Bacardí, whiskey, gin and other wet goods from Bimini, Grand Bahama, Nassau or even Cuba, would come roaring into the Everglades, and, dropping down to secret landing fields, would be met by motor cars and trucks with little fear of being caught by federal or state officers.

But long before the era of prohibition the Everglades had served as a refuge for desperate men. During the Seminole War the Indians found safety in the fastnesses of the vast morass, and by trails and waterways known only to themselves they would make sudden sorties, attacking the forts and settlements, ambushing troops sent against them, and vanishing like avenging spirits in the depths of the Glades. And from the earliest days of slavery in Florida runaway Negroes sought freedom and safety there. At times they joined the Indian bands, but as their numbers increased they formed bands or colonies of their own and became even more savage and more dreaded than the Indians themselves.

Also, from time to time, outlaws and bandits have made the Everglades their haunts. The last and most famous of such desperadoes were the members of the notorious Ashley Gang who made their headquarters at the Tracy house, about four miles north of the present village of Canal Point near the southern end of Lake Okeechobee. Led by John Ashley, a Florida "cracker," this band of murderers and bandits brought a reign of terror to the entire countryside. In the big rambling frame house they conducted a speakeasy, a brothel and a gambling layout, and, to cover their true activities, they maintained a gasoline filling station. At first operating locally as hold-up men and petty robbers, the gang soon enlarged its sphere of depredations and became bank robbers. Banks at Pompano, Stewart and elsewhere were robbed, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in booty were carried off to the gang's hideaway in the Glades. Another branch of their business was

hijacking the airplanes and trucks carrying loads of contraband liquor across the Glades. No one can say how many thousands of dollars' worth of liquor they stole or how many unfortunate rum-runners and truck drivers were shot down, for the deep black waters of the Everglades hold their secrets well and law breakers cannot seek the aid of the law.

Ashley's career of crime had its beginning in 1912 when, at the age of twenty, he murdered a Seminole Indian after a disagreement over a trade. Arrested and imprisoned, he soon escaped and disappeared. But not for long. Accompanied by a gang of half a dozen of his friends and relatives, he swept down in true Wild Western style upon Stewart, robbed the bank, shot down citizens and made good his escape. For the next ten years the Ashley gang held southeastern Florida in a reign of terror. Murders, bank robberies, hold-ups, jail deliveries, destruction of property, the slaughter of outlying settlers and the hijacking of trucks followed in swift succession. Scarcely a day passed that some outrage was not committed by the desperadoes who carried on a veritable guerilla warfare along the borders of the Everglades and even seized boats and tried their hands at piracy among the Bahamas.

The law appeared powerless to protect persons or property, and the members of the notorious gang seemed to bear charmed lives. Again and again they shot it out with armed posses of enraged citizens, but always the gangsters made a safe getaway without loss as far as known. Again and again the officers of the law were hot on their trail, and with heavily armed volunteers gave

## THE EVERGLADES AND LAKE DISTRICT

chase, but without result, for the gang always vanished as if by magic. Although it was well known that Ashley's headquarters was the old Tracy house, and that it was through this source he obtained aid and information, no conclusive proof could be secured, and although a careful watch was kept and the place was raided repeatedly, no member of the gang was found. Obviously, like true dime novel bandits, the desperadoes had some secret hide-out, but even bloodhounds and Indian trackers failed to trail the gangsters to their hidden lair.

Often, for long periods, no outrage would be committed, and the people of the neighborhood towns would begin to breathe freely, convinced that at last the murderous outlaws had left the vicinity for other fields of endeavor. Then suddenly, out of a clear sky, the bandits would appear, loot banks and stores and vanish leaving a trail of dead and wounded men behind.

And with each new raid they became bolder. They would attack in broad daylight, and more than once they raided the same town twice within a period of a few days. But at last, when the country seemed absolutely powerless to rid itself of the robbers and murderers, the leader's father, J. W. Ashley, was shot down while the gang was staging a liquor raid in January, 1923. Although young Ashley vowed to exact a terrible vengeance for his father's well-earned death, and threatened three reprisals, yet nearly two years passed before the Ashley gang struck. Then, on the first day of November, 1924, the bandits swept down on the town. But the evil spirit who had guarded Ashley's mob for so long must have deserted him, and in a pitched battle between the bandits

and Sheriff Baker and a posse at Sebastian Ridge, John Ashley, his nephew, Hanford Mobley, Ray Lynn and John Middleton were killed.

That memorable day spelled *Finis* for the gang which for over ten years had robbed, murdered and pillaged throughout the entire district. But the hide-out of the notorious bandit remained undiscovered. Somewhere in the Everglades not far distant was his secret lair. And as Ashley was known to have secured booty to a value of over quarter of a million dollars, and as he had not, as far as known, spent even a small portion of such a fortune, it was commonly believed that he had hidden his loot at the spot where he had found safe refuge so many times, and for weeks men combed the surrounding country in a search for the bandit's den and his cached treasure.

Among the survivors of the gang who had escaped death only to be captured was one man who had been sentenced to life imprisonment. Like his fellows he had steadfastly refused to talk, but at last he offered to lead the authorities to the hiding place of Ashley's treasure in exchange for a commutation of his sentence. Elated at the prospect of recovering the stolen funds, the authorities agreed. But instead of guiding the officers to Ashley's cache the bandit led them to a spot where confederates were awaiting him, and escaped in a shower of bullets. But his freedom was short-lived, and three months later he paid the penalty for his crimes.

As dead men tell no tales, and as all search for the desperadoes' lair and the hidden booty had proved fruitless, further efforts to locate it were abandoned and as

the years passed it became scarcely more than a local tradition.

Then, ten years after the Ashley gang had been wiped out, chance revealed the spot which the most careful search had failed to disclose. A few weeks ago (in September, 1934) Mr. O. L. Hawk of West Palm Beach, and Mr. Howard Perry of Salerno went on a fishing trip among the mangroves near the St. Lucie inlet. Deep in the swamp and entirely surrounded by the dense growth of mangrove trees, they came upon a small island of dry land covered with large trees. Such islands are common enough in the swamps and the Everglades, and the fishermen's curiosity was not aroused, until, upon landing, they discovered that the place had been used as a burial mound, for at one end of the island were a number of skeletons partly exposed, or hidden under a few inches of sand. Searching about for possible Indian relics, the two men wandered for a hundred yards or so among the trees and came suddenly upon five skeletons lying side by side under a black mangrove tree. That these were not the bones of Indians and that they were of fairly recent date was obvious, and glancing about, Mr. Hawk and his companion suddenly realized that they had stumbled upon the long-sought hide-out of the Ashley gang's leader. Near at hand were the ruins of a rudely built rock camp with a fireplace of stones and scrap iron. Scattered about among the weeds were empty whiskey bottles and demijohns. At one side were the rust-covered hoops and fragments of rotten wooden staves of a barrel. But most conclusive evidence of all was the name "John Ashley" carved deeply into the trunk of the



tree beside the skeletons. Below the name were the letters "TxT" written vertically, and below these, placed side by side, one above each of the skeletons, were five vertical lines.

Who the bandit's victims were who were laid out there in his secret den beneath the tree with the scored tally of their deaths, no one knows. Perhaps they were members of his own gang who had been put on the spot or again they may have been captives who, after having been forced by torture to reveal desired information, had been slaughtered in cold blood.

The truth will probably never be known, for no scrap of clothing, no piece of jewelry, no object of any description which might serve to identify the skeletons could be found. And now speculation is rife as whether or not the Ashley gang's treasure is hidden on the lonely islet. And if so, and if it is found, who can rightfully claim it, for Mr. Hawk, before making his discovery public, quietly purchased the long-sought bandits' lair in the heart of the mangrove swamp.

In addition to Ashley and his fellow bandits there were several women in the gang, among them Mrs. Tracy who "ran" the speakeasy-filling station den, and Laura Uptogrove, the "Queen of the Everglades." According to all accounts, Queen Laura was a sort of bandit Mae West, with alluring figure and lovely face, but as foul-mouthed, as tough and as callous and criminal as any male member of the gang. Her principal part in the organization was to act as a "spotter," visiting the towns, flirting with susceptible employees of the banks that had been selected as victims, securing full

inside information as to exits, men on duty and the most propitious hours for robbery; and it was largely owing to the efficiency of the "Queen" in carrying out her duties that the gang was so successful and made safe getaways.

The end of the "Queen of the Everglades" was if anything even more melodramatic, as described to me by an eyewitness. A man had stopped at the Tracy filling station and had asked for four gallons of gasoline, but by some error the Uptogrove woman gave him five gallons. Words and argument followed, the "Queen" flew into a furious temper and cursed and berated the fellow who leaped from his car and struck her with his fist, knocking her down. Springing to her feet she dashed into the house and returned with a loaded shotgun. Before she could shoot, her aged mother rushed out and seized the weapon, which exploded harmlessly in the air. Screaming and mouthing with fury, cursing frightfully, the Queen, insane with anger at being thwarted in her murderous intent, rushed upstairs, seized a bottle of Lysol and gulped down the contents. Scarcely had she swallowed the poison when with one piercing scream of agony she collapsed and fell plunging to the ground with a crash which my informant declared "might have been heard a mile away."

With the dramatic suicide of the "Queen of the Everglades" the Ashley gang came to a fitting end; but the old Tracy house still stands and neighbors tell hair-raising and horrid tales of sights and scenes of crimes and outrages which took place when the Ashley Gang

and the Queen of the Everglades held the district in a reign of terror less than a decade ago.

At several places near the road, as elsewhere in the Glades and in various sections of Florida, there are large prehistoric Indian mounds. Although comparatively little organized and systematic work has been done in the excavation of these mounds, what investigations that have been carried on have revealed some most interesting and puzzling results. As many of the mounds are composed almost wholly of sea shells it would seem to indicate that they were formed when the Everglades were still an estuary of the sea or at least salt marshes, although, of course, it is possible, even if improbable, that the Indians transported vast quantities of marine shellfish far inland before eating them. Be that as it may, there appears to be no question that the mounds were primarily the work of some unknown prehistoric race with a culture totally distinct from that of the known Florida tribes. Artifacts, pottery, implements—all are unlike those of known tribes, although the skeletons and skulls found in the mounds prove their makers to have been purely Indian.

At times the mounds are small and are true kitchen middens, but in many cases they served as burial places as well as village or camp sites. The largest of all known mounds in Florida is the "Big Mound" ten miles east of Canal Point on the edge of the Everglades. This covers an area of several acres and its general appearance and form would indicate either a large and populous settlement or a rude fortification. Although first reported by officers of the army during the Seminole

War (1835-42), this great mound is scarcely known and rarely visited. But as it appears to be far more ancient than other mounds, and is far larger, excavations scientifically conducted might throw much light on the prehistoric inhabitants of Florida.

The road paralleling the railway follows the eastern shore of Lake Okeechobee northward to the town of Okeechobee. So shoal is this great body of water, that although the western shore is out of sight, yet herons and other wading birds may be seen standing in the water a mile or more from the land.

It was near the present town of Okeechobee that the greatest and "hardest fought battle" of the Seminole War took place on Christmas Day, 1837. Although the battle lasted from morning until mid-afternoon, and although the Indians finally withdrew, yet they were unquestionably the victors. At the very first volley Colonel Gentry was killed, and when the battle was over the troops had lost 26 men killed and 112 wounded, while only ten dead Indians were found on the field of battle. Such an engagement scarcely merits the name of "battle" but was more in the nature of a skirmish and reminds one of some of the "bloody battles" of Latin-American revolutions which are fought "heroically" for hours with a total loss of half a dozen men killed and as many more wounded. But then, back in 1837, men were not armed with machine guns, hand grenades, automatic pistols, breach-loading repeating rifles, gas bombs and similar murderous implements of modern warfare. Neither did they drop death-dealing projectiles

from airplanes or exterminate their foes by means of poison gasses. Such highly civilized and efficacious means of destroying one's fellow men were not even dreamed of, and when enemies came to grips they depended upon muzzle-loading muskets—the accuracy of which could not be relied upon at over one hundred yards' distance—muzzle-loading pistols, swords and bows and arrows. And if I am not vastly mistaken, even in the unimportant battles of those days the percentage of men killed and wounded, in proportion to the amount of powder and lead expended, was fully as great as in our modern battles in which several tons of powder, steel and lead are required to wipe out the life of one poor soldier.

At Okeechobee the Everglades are left behind and the character of the country completely changes. Sandy soil and endless pine trees take the place of muck, sawgrass and cypress, with here and there clumps of ragged unkempt palmettos—probably the ugliest and most slovenly of trees. Taken altogether, it is a rather dreary, monotonous and forsaken landscape, until, at Lake Anne, one enters Florida's lake district.

From here, stretching northward through the central portion of the state for nearly four hundred miles, is a chain of lakes varying in size from mere ponds to lakes twenty-five miles or more in length, and many of transcending beauty. There are more than sixty of these lakes, and while some have thriving villages, smiling farms and the homes of winter visitors about their borders, many are as deserted, as primitive and as

seemingly remote as in the days when only the Indians fished in their waters and hunted on their shores. Lake Placid, June in the Water, Lake Istokpoga, Weohyakapka, Crooked Lake, Lake Kissimmee, Rosalie Lake, Lake Lucerne, Hatchineha, Cypress Lake, Tohopekaligo, Lake Louisa, Lake Apopka, Lake Harris, Lake Bryant, Lake George, Orange Lake, Lake Lochloosa, Sante Fe Lake—these are but a few of the many charming bodies of water in Florida's lake district. But delightful as they are they lack one most important feature. There are no mountains, no real hills to be reflected on their placid bosoms, and, to my mind at least, a lake to be truly beautiful must nestle among wooded hills or lofty snow-capped mountain peaks.

Before the advent of the destructive white man and the nefarious plume hunter these lakes were the haunt of vast flocks of flamingoes; but today the magnificent birds have practically vanished from Florida. Only in the most remote depths of the Everglades, in the deserted mangrove swamps at the extreme southwestern tip of the peninsula, in a few of the bird sanctuaries and where, as at Miami, they have been introduced in parks and gardens, are flamingoes seen. Oddly enough the last flamingo reported from the Atlantic coast was observed standing, sound asleep, upon the bathing beach at Ormond!

It is a crying shame that the flamingoes should have been almost entirely exterminated from Florida, and it is a great pity that the state or some public spirited citizen does not restore the former flocks by introducing a large number of the gorgeous grotesque birds. They

are easily obtained in Cuba where, in the public markets, I have seen scores of live and healthy young flamingoes offered for sale at two dollars each. And if introduced when young and placed in an environment adapted to their habits and food requirements, they would remain and increase. Could Florida offer such a marvelous sight as may be seen in some of the Bahamas, notably at Inagua, where from ten to twenty thousand flamingoes may be seen nesting, it would add immeasurably to the manifold interests and attractions of the state.

As this central portion of Florida is comparatively new and recently settled there is little of romantic historical interest, dating back more than a century, and such historic sites and associations as there are, are connected mainly with the Seminole and Civil Wars. As Fort Meade the final treaty between the United States and the Seminoles was signed. At Orlando the first National Good Roads Congress was held in 1897 and was attended by delegates from all over the world. At one time both General Grant and General Sherman were stationed at Sanford, and here General Grant turned the first spadeful of earth in the construction of the railway to Tampa.

But the chief attraction for visitors to this part of Florida is the famous Singing Tower at Mountain Lake near Lake Wales. Erected as a memorial to his beauty-loving grandparents, by Edward William Bok, the Philadelphia publisher and magazine magnate, this architectural masterpiece with its simple beauty mirrored in the surrounding lake is, next to the Taj Mahal, perhaps the

most lovely monument in the world. Situated in a bird sanctuary glorious with flowers and semi-tropical verdure, and echoing to the happy songs of countless birds, the name "Singing Tower" is most appropriate. Yet even the melodies of mockingbirds and cardinals, the cooing of doves, the plaintive whistles of quail, the trills of warblers and the chorus of a myriad of feathered songsters cannot compete with the beautiful notes of the tower's carillon of bells weighing over sixty tons and played by a carillonneur from Belgium, Anton Brees. From every part of Florida, from every state, from far-distant lands, visitors by thousands have journeyed to Lake Wales to gaze upon the Singing Tower, to marvel at its beauty and to listen entranced to the music of its silver-tongued carillon.

Northward and westward from Lake Wales are many villages and towns, as well as monuments, made famous during the War of the Rebellion and the Indian wars. At Bushnell is the Dade Memorial commemorating the so-called "massacre" of Major Dade and his entire command by the Indians at a point a few miles distant, in 1835. Between here and Ocala, Osceola, the famous leader of the Seminoles, was wounded in battle; and it was at Fort King not far from Ocala, that Osceola, smarting from the treatment and the insults he had received at the hands of General Thompson, assassinated the General and his aide; the first act of violence in the Seminole War.

A few miles south of Gainesville is the site of Fort Drane, near which Major Heilman defeated the Indians in a sharp engagement in 1836—the only real victory of



the United States troops during the entire Seminole War.

But if this section of Florida offers little in the way of ancient history and romance, it possesses an abundance of natural wonders and interests. Most famous of all is Silver Springs, so often shown upon the motion picture screen that it has become known throughout the world. Yet no one who has not actually visited Silver Springs can visualize its beauty and its marvels. A great rock basin over one hundred yards in diameter and nearly one hundred feet in depth filled with water as clear and transparent as glass, Silver Springs is a natural swimming pool and is an ideal spot for securing underwater photographs of swimmers, divers, fishes and other aquatic creatures. Many a submarine scene has been "shot" at Silver Springs; many a pearl diver of the South Seas, many a treasure seeker salvaging a sunken galleon, many a submarine sent to the bottom of the ocean by enemy depth bombs, has been photographed in the transparent waters of Silver Springs.

But the fact that it has been so widely commercialized, that submarine scenes have been so frequently "faked" here, that it has been transformed from a natural wonder in a sylvan setting to a yacht anchorage and a playground for bathing beauties and their boy friends has not wholly ruined its attractions nor entirely destroyed its marvels. Despite man's and woman's efforts to spoil it, its real beauties still remain. Looking downward through the incredibly clear water from a glass-bottomed boat, one may see the inrushing water gushing from the subterranean springs and streams

which feed the pool at the rate of 300,000,000 gallons of water daily! Gazing at the shadowy blue cañons, the multicolored rock walls, the waving water plants with schools of fish and huge turtles swimming about in the depths, one has the sensation of peering through some tropical sea and looking upon coral reefs rather than at limestone rocks in a pool in central Florida.

Neither is Silver Springs lacking in romance, for there are two fascinating legends associated with the strange and beautiful pool; one of Indian origin and immeasurably ancient, the other a legend of the white men and of comparatively recent date.

According to Indian tradition, a maiden and a young brave, Ocklawaha and Winonah, although of different tribes, fell madly in love, and forgetting all tribal enmities held their secret trysts beside the clear waters of the enchanted pool. But the stern chiefs of their respective tribes frowned upon the lovers and forbade their marriage and their meetings. At last, knowing that their romance must end, and realizing that ancient tribal laws must forever keep them parted, they plunged, clasped in each other's arms, into the limpid depths of the pool. But the Great Spirit, taking pity upon them, guided them into the great cavern now known as Indian Cave, and through subterranean passageways to the fabulous land whence their ancestors had come.

More elaborate and more tragic is the legend of the palefaces. Among the early settlers in the vicinity of Silver Springs was Captain Harding Douglass, a proud and haughty Carolinian, whose only son, Claire, fell in love with Bernice Mayo, a local girl of Virginian an-

cestry. Like the unfortunate Indian lovers, the two met secretly and passed many happy hours beside the Silver Springs, until at last young Douglass boldly faced his father and declared his determination to marry Bernice. A terrible scene followed, the proud Captain swearing that he would sooner see his son dead than wedded to the Mayo girl. Then, finding that nothing he said could influence his son, he pretended to acquiesce although planning to separate the lovers forever. The next day Claire was despatched on an alleged business trip to Europe. Not until her sweetheart had been gone for months did Bernice learn the truth. Yet she still hoped for her lover's return until a year had dragged slowly by with no word from Claire. Broken-hearted and filled with despair, she slowly wasted away, daily becoming more and more fragile until, little more than a ghost of her former self, she half-staggered, half crept to Silver Springs and fell fainting into the arms of an aged negress known as Aunt Silla. Recovering consciousness, the dying girl begged the kindly old woman to grant her last request.

"I have come here to die," she said. "Tonight, when the moon rises, row my body to the Boiling Springs and bury me beneath the waters."

In vain the old negress remonstrated. Filled with superstitious fear at carrying out such an eerie mission she argued with the girl.

Suddenly Bernice raised her wasted body and gazed with unnaturally bright eyes into the face of the negress. "I am a dying woman," she gasped. "I have talked with God and He has answered me. Though my love has been destroyed in life it shall not be so in death. Within

twenty-four hours from the time my body lies at the bottom of Boiling Springs, Claire shall join me there. If you fail to carry out my dying wishes evil will befall you and you will ever be haunted by my dying curse."

With chattering teeth and rolling eyes the negress promised, and with a contented smile upon her waxen face Bernice Mayo sank back in death.

At dead of night Aunt Silla carried the body of the girl to the shore of the pool, placed her tenderly in a skiff, and rowed silently to the spot where, far beneath the surface, the water boiled and bubbled from a great mysterious fissure in the rocky bottom of the pool. Lifting the dead girl and muttering a prayer, the negress placed the body on the calm water, and with tears streaming down her black cheeks watched it sink slowly into the depths.

Then suddenly, as if by some miracle, the bubbling, seething springs ceased, and as the mortal remains of Bernice Mayo reached the fissure and disappeared the rocks slowly closed above the body.

Filled with terror at the supernatural scene she had witnessed, Aunt Silla rowed hastily ashore and cowered, praying, within her hut. But with the dawning of another day, and with brilliant sunshine gleaming on the waters of the pool, her fears were somewhat dissipated and the events of the night seemed more like a dream than reality. At last her curiosity overcame her last dread, and shoving her skiff from shore she paddled toward the spot where Bernice had vanished.

Unknown to the negress, Claire Douglass had returned on that same morning. During his long absence Bernice

had become scarcely more than a memory, and at his father's home he met his beautiful cousin whom his father had selected as his son's future bride.

"How would you young people like to take a row on Silver Springs?" he asked at the breakfast table. "I have a new skiff and if you do not object I'll join you."

At mention of the spot where he and Bernice had spent so many happy hours, a sudden overwhelming desire to meet his former sweetheart swept over young Douglass, and he gladly agreed. As the party reached the shores of the pool and embarked in the skiff they noticed another boat resting motionless near the Boiling Springs, its only occupant an old negress who was peering into the depths with tear-filled eyes.

As the Douglass skiff reached the spot and the three gazed into the crystal water the girl uttered a sudden cry. "Oh, see, there is something that looks like a hand, a human hand!"

With staring, incredulous eyes the two men saw the boiling waters die down to reveal a white hand and arm with a golden chain locked about the wrist. Instantly young Douglass recognized it. His face paled and dread fear clutched at his heart. And then, before his amazed eyes the rocks seemed to part and he saw the body of his loved one resting on the bottom of the pool, a smile upon her dead face, her golden hair surrounding her head like a halo.

With a wild, heart-piercing cry, the young man plunged into the pool, diving straight downward toward the form of the girl whose life had been sacrificed to love.

Speechless, awed, his father and his cousin watched as

Claire swam deeper and deeper into the mysterious cavern, until, reaching the body of Bernice, he seized her in his arms. And then, before their staring eyes the rocky walls drew together, and from the spot where the lovers had vanished the water boiled and bubbled and hid everything from view.

Today, visitors to Silver Springs may gaze downward at the "Bridal Chamber" where the water seethes upward from the fissures eighty feet beneath the surface, bringing with it a constant stream of tiny, pearly shells. And on the rocky bottom one may see curious plants with lily-like leaves and waxen-white flowers known as the Bernice Bridal Wreath. Among the young people of the vicinity these strange underwater blossoms are highly prized, for there is a local belief that a young woman who receives one of the blooms as a gift will be a bride within the twelvemonth.

This legend of Claire Douglass and Bernice Mayo is vouched for as the unvarnished truth by many of the old residents, and Aunt Silla, who was still living until thirty years ago when she passed away at the venerable age of one hundred and ten, related the story and told of the part she had played in the drama many times. But the theme of the tale and its important details are so strikingly similar to the ancient Indian legend that one cannot help feeling that it is largely an adaptation of the redmen's tradition.

As a natural wonder Silver Springs, for all its beauty, cannot equal the Devil's Millhopper, a great bowl one hundred feet deep fed by twenty or more streams continuously flowing into the great well which has no visible

or detectable outlet yet ever maintains an unvarying and constant level.

All over this limestone district are innumerable natural wells, natural bridges and underground streams. In many of the wells the water is almost icy cold. Some of the wells are dry, and in one spot it is possible to descend for forty feet, travel underground for a mile or more and ascend through another well. No wonder the Indians called this section of Florida Alachua or the "water jug," for it is literally one vast reservoir.

Coincidences, however, are not so infrequent as many imagine, and as many disappointed or frustrated lovers have sought death together rather than to live apart, it would not be surprising if both the legend of Winonah and Ocklawaha and the story of Bernice Mayo and Claire Douglass were founded on fact. And whatever the truth may be, the romantic legends serve to add greater interest and romance to the interest and romance of wonderful Silver Springs.



## CHAPTER VII

### ALONG THE GULF COAST

Where De Soto landed. Ill-fated expeditions. Florida's first boom town. Ancient forts. The Negro fortress. Strange characters. Tampa. The De Soto Oak. Where De Soto slaked his thirst. A bit of Cuba. Tarpon Springs and the world's greatest sponge fishery. Mushroom cities. The first golf course and the circus art museum.

ALTHOUGH the oldest existing town, the oldest forts and oldest buildings in the United States are on Florida's eastern coast, yet history was being made on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico nearly fifty years before St. Augustine was founded, and there were Spanish settlements at Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor and Pensacola from ten to thirty years before any settlements had been established on the Atlantic coast of the Peninsula. For that matter, much of the interior of western Florida had been explored by the Spaniards, and oranges had been introduced, nearly a decade before either the Dons or the French had erected their first fort on the eastern shores of Florida.

But of those daring, persistent and tireless old Spaniards, who sought an El Dorado in western Florida, no trace remains today. There are no ruins of the forts they built as defenses against the Indians; no mounds mark the houses wherein they dwelt for a space. Misfortune after misfortune, ill luck and utter failure



dogged their footsteps. Nature seemed to conspire against them, until even the fanatical, indomitable leaders surrendered in the face of sufferings and hardships, famine and hostile savages, hurricanes and fever, and gave up in despair. Why all of the Spanish expeditions and settlements in western Florida should have proved such dismal failures, whereas on the eastern coast they proved successful, is a mystery. The conditions were no worse on the Gulf coast than on the Atlantic; the Indians were no more hostile, in fact they were inclined to be more friendly; hurricanes were no more frequent; and there were no European foes to guard against and fight as on the other side of the peninsula.

Perchance it was because the men themselves were of a different type and sought riches and treasures in precious metals and gems rather than to establish towns and till the soil, or then again it may have been merely chance, Fate or Destiny. But whatever the cause, the tales of those earliest adventurers and explorers, Alonzo de Pineda, Pamfilo de Navarez, Nuñez de Cabeza de Vaca, Tristan de Luna and even Hernando de Soto all read like fiction thrillers and are made up of chapter after chapter of sufferings, hardships, tragedies and horrors. It was not until 1696, one hundred and thirty-seven years after De Luna established the first settlement at Pensacola, and one hundred and thirty-one years after St. Augustine was founded, that the first permanent settlement was made on the Gulf coast at Pensacola.

But the Spaniards had come too late. While their

fellow countrymen across the peninsula at St. Augustine, Matanzas, Fernandina and elsewhere had been increasing in numbers and had erected powerful forts and had built walled cities and were in a position to protect themselves from their foes, the French and English had been looking with envious eyes upon this new land of Florida. France even had laid claim to the territory, backing her claims on the priority of French settlements, and battles had been fought and blood spilled on both sides. The tide of victory had flowed first one way and then the other. De Gourgues had wreaked terrible vengeance on the Spaniards for their massacre of the Huguenots on the St. Johns River. Sir Francis Drake had attacked St. Augustine and had sacked and burned the town. Missions and settlements had been destroyed and their inmates killed by the ever-hostile Indians. Pirates had swept up and down the coast attacking and looting the towns. The Dutch had raided the Spaniards and had seized their ships. Hundreds of the settlers and soldiers had succumbed to yellow fever, and the British with their Indian allies had driven the Spaniards from all of the territory north of the St. Johns.

Yet throughout that century and more of almost constant warfare, constant battles with Indians, yellow fever, famine, hurricanes, pirates and three of the most powerful of nations, the Spaniards on the Atlantic seaboard had managed to survive, to hold on, to build and strengthen, and by the time that De Arriola landed at Pensacola and founded that town, St. Augustine had become a walled and strongly fortified city of over two

thousand inhabitants, and the Spaniards had so firmly established themselves on the eastern coast of Florida that despite everything, despite foes and the elements, epidemics and cataclysms, they held control over Florida for over two centuries, save for a brief space of twenty years when it was in the hands of England.

But during the century that the Spanish had left western Florida to the Indians and to Nature, the French and British had awakened to the fact that there was more to Florida than the Atlantic coast line, and that along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, about the mouth of the Mississippi and along the banks of the mighty stream, were lands and waters well worth having. And the fact that there was a Spanish settlement or two already established didn't bother them in the least. Eight years after Pensacola had been founded, ex-Governor Moore of Carolina, with a force of twenty-five white men and a thousand Indians, wiped out the Spanish forces near Tallahassee. Barely a decade later the French built a fort at St. Josephs Bay, and the following year (1719), they swept down upon Pensacola and took possession of fort and town with scarcely a struggle—which wasn't at all surprising, or to the discredit of the Spaniards, for they were far outnumbered by the French who appeared off the port in three great ships carrying a total of 104 guns, while at the same time a force of soldiers with eight hundred Indian allies attacked from the land side. Fearing that the Spanish prisoners might revolt if left in charge of the small garrison they could spare, the French decided to deport the lot in two ships which had been preparing to

sail for France.

But before the vessels reached Cuba they were picked up by a Spanish fleet, and the Admiral, learning how matters stood at Pensacola, convoyed the captured ships to Havana, where they were refitted, and heavily armed. Then, manned with nearly two thousand marines and soldiers, they sailed for Pensacola. As the French, feeling perfectly secure, had left less than three hundred men to garrison the forts, the place instantly surrendered to the Spaniards. But the Spanish occupation was short-lived, and within the month back came the Frenchmen with six ships and 230 guns. This time, however, the Spaniards were not so easily taken. Despite the superior force attacking them, they fought like demons, until the last pound of powder and the last round of shot had been fired, before they surrendered. Once in possession, the French burnt the forts, destroyed the batteries and made prisoners of war of the entire force of Spaniards. Their victory proved of little value, however, for shortly afterward a treaty of peace was signed by France and Spain, and Pensacola was returned to the Spanish Crown. Thus in the space of four months Pensacola changed hands four times.

I doubt if any other city in the United States can equal that record, yet Pensacola's shifting of ownership and flags had just begun. In August, 1814, the British fleet arrived off Pensacola, and the troops under Colonel Nichols took possession of the forts at Barrancas. Calling upon the inhabitants to rise against the "slavery of the United States," the Colonel made friends with the Spanish Governor, Manriquez, and incited the In-

dians to butcher the American settlers of the frontier. And for a space of three months there was the unique and anomalous sight of two national flags—British and Spanish—flying above Pensacola.

But in November, General Andrew Jackson, with five thousand backwoodsmen from Tennessee and a large number of Indian allies, appeared and took the town with little loss on either side. So down came the British and Spanish flags and up went the Stars and Stripes. Colonel Nichols and his ships managed to slip away, however, after having blown up Fort Barrancas; and General Jackson, assuming that the British had sailed to attack Mobile, turned Pensacola over to the Spanish Governor, hauled down the American flag and started in chase of the elusive English commander.

By this time the befuddled inhabitants of Pensacola must have been sorely puzzled as to what government they owed allegiance or just what flag to recognize. But worse was yet to come. Finding the British had gone to Apalachicola and were fortifying the river, Jackson turned his steps toward New Orleans, after dispatching Major Blue with a thousand men to attend to the British.

For four years Pensacola remained under the Spanish flag, and then, in 1818, General Jackson again appeared on the scene and took possession of the city, declaring that the Spaniards had been supplying arms to the Indians. Once more the American flag flew from the forts and the government buildings, while the town was administered by a provisional government which remained in control until 1819 when a new Spanish

governor and a force of Spanish troops arrived, whereupon Pensacola was peacefully returned to Spain and the flags were changed again. By this time, however, negotiations for the transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States were well under way, and two years later, the Spanish flag was hauled down and the Stars and Stripes was hoisted in its place for—so the inhabitants devoutly hoped—the last time.

By now they must have become so accustomed to seeing a new flag flying over their city that they scarcely would have been surprised had they awakened some fine morning to find the green banner of Erin, the Star and Crescent of Turkey or even the White Elephant of Siam fluttering from the flagpoles of their town; but none could have dreamed of seeing an entirely new flag. Yet many a resident who had been under the flags of Spain, England and the United States fought under the Stars and Bars that for a time flew over Pensacola.

However, there was less actual fighting in Florida during the Civil War than in any other Confederate state, and it is said that hundreds of families, dwelling in remote sections of the state, never knew that there was a war until after it was all over.

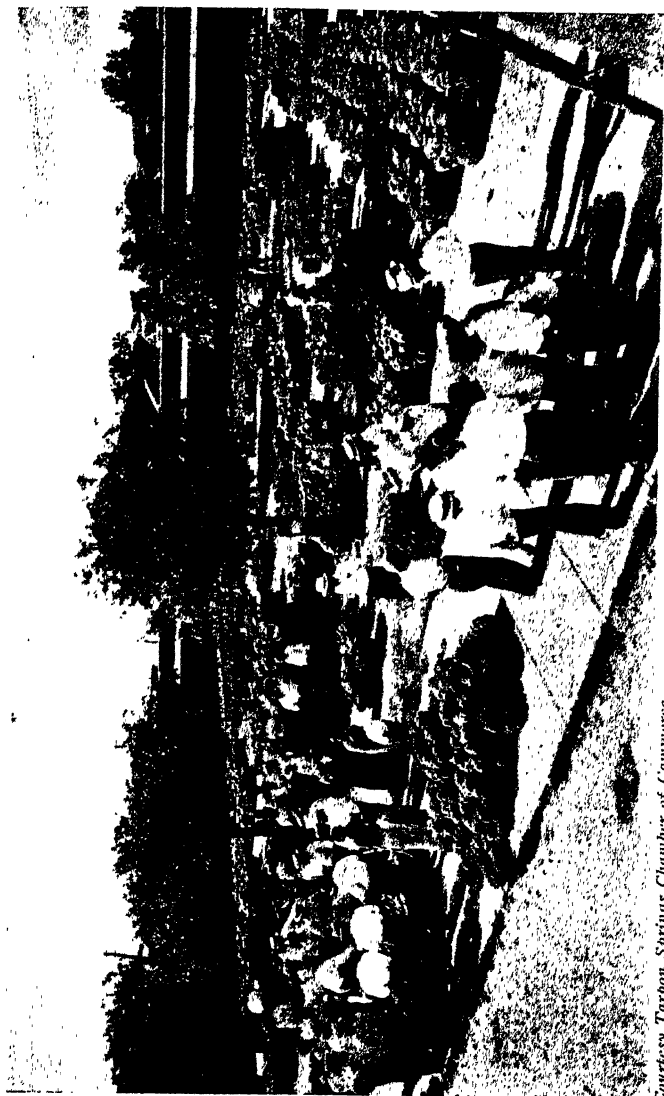
Barely ten months after the outbreak of hostilities, in February, 1862, to be exact, Pensacola was evacuated by the Confederate troops and the Stars and Bars gave way to the Stars and Stripes that have flown above the city ever since.

But even if Florida was the scene of few conflicts, even if the Federal forces did take possession of all the coast early in the war, yet the state can boast of the fact

that Tallahassee was the only state capital south of the Mason and Dixon line, and east of the Mississippi that remained continuously in the hands of the Confederacy throughout the duration of the Civil War.

About all the thanks which General Andrew Jackson received for his activities round and about Pensacola was to be accused of having ulterior personal motives for his rather rough and ready method of taking possession of territory belonging to a presumably friendly nation. As a result of conditions thereabout, there was something of a land boom for a time, and General Jackson was openly charged with fathering it and profiting from it. But he was completely exonerated when it transpired that Jackson the land speculator was not even a relative of the General.

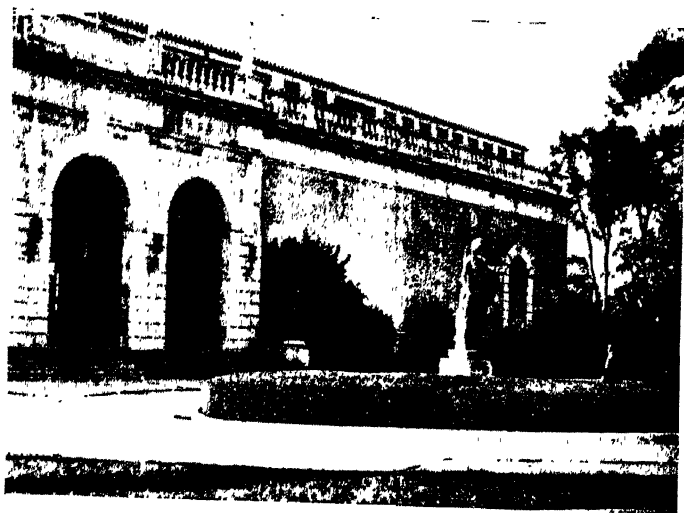
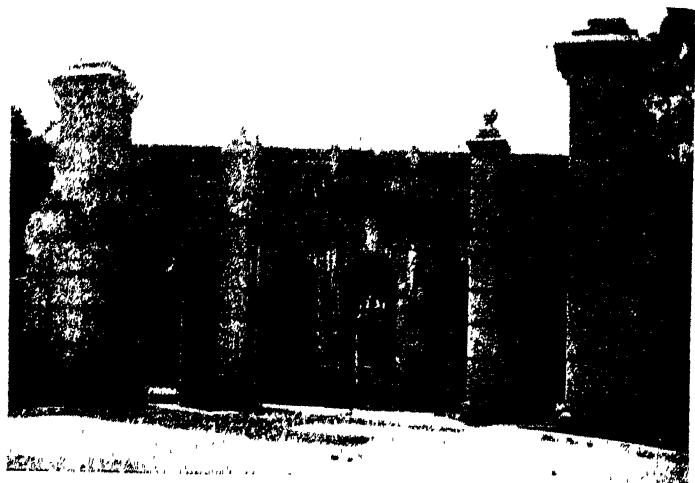
Though the flurry in real estate about Pensacola amounted to little, a real boom took place not far distant a few years later. This was at St. Joseph on the bay of the same name, a little town first established by the French in 1718. Abandoned by them a few years later, it was refortified by Spain, and then became forgotten and abandoned for over a century, until, in 1829, a new city of St. Joseph suddenly arose like a mushroom on the shore of St. Josephs Bay. Just why or how the boom was started no one can explain; but start it did, and the almost magical growth of St. Joseph has been equaled only by that of Miami. Land utterly worthless before suddenly acquired fabulous values. Money flowed like the proverbial water. Docks and great warehouses were built, a railway was constructed, fine buildings were erected, and soon St. Joseph became famed as the rich-



*Courtesy Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce*

A SPONGE SALE IN PROGRESS AT 'THE WORLD'S LARGEST MARKET', TARPON SPRINGS





ENTRANCE GATE AND COURTYARD OF THE RINGLING ART MUSEUM,  
SARASOTA

est and wickedest city in America, a reputation once proudly held by Port Royal in Jamaica and, prior to its sacking by Sir Henry Morgan, by Panama City.

Business grew apace in St. Joseph; cotton came pouring into the town in river steamboats, plying the nearby rivers and streams, and discharged their cargoes at the terminus of a railway line five miles from the port. A wharf nearly a mile in length extended into the bay, and the rails were laid along this so that the cotton-laden cars could be run alongside the great ships whose masts and spars formed a forest of rigging above the docks. At one time over one hundred and fifty thousand bales of cotton were shipped annually from St. Joseph, and other industries and businesses were in proportion. By 1835 it had attained a population of nearly five thousand inhabitants, and on the tenth of February, 1836, it was duly incorporated as a full-fledged city; so important had the city become that it was selected as the site for the first Constitutional Convention of the Territory in December, 1838. Yet two years later St. Joseph was almost deserted, a dead city, its trade and prosperity vanished, its docks and warehouses empty, and with barely three hundred persons still living there.

In one fell stroke, in the course of a few short weeks, over seventy-five percent of St. Joseph's population had been completely wiped out by an awful epidemic of yellow fever brought in by a ship from South American ports. But even without the fatal plague the city could not have survived for long. With the decrease of the price of cotton the cost of transportation by way of St.

Joseph became prohibitive. The harbor was none too safe and was exposed to westerly gales, and the muddy bottom was poor holding ground, while other and more accessible and better protected ports had come into existence. But it was the deadly Yellow Jack which destroyed St. Joseph utterly. The few inhabitants who had survived the plague hurriedly left the accursed spot, and by 1850 not a living soul remained in the once rich and prosperous city. Wind and weather played havoc with the houses and buildings; the wharves rotted away; grass, weeds and trees sprouted from once busy streets and from between the ties of the railway; and St. Joseph became a forgotten city, a ghost of the past, with only the three cemeteries, crowded with crosses and headstones, to tell the tragic story of its passing and the awful toll of death.

Years passed, trees two feet in diameter grew from the railway track and from riven pavements. Here and there a mound of creepers and vines marked the rusted, corroded remains of machinery or iron work. Rising above the jungle of brush and scrub were half-ruined chimneys. A few rotten spiles protruding from the sea were all that marked the great pier where scores of ships had once moored. Not a trace of a human habitation remained.

Then, once again, St. Joseph sprang into life. The menhaden fishery became important and a fish factory was erected at the old port. A hotel was built. The main motor highway from Apalachicola to Panama City passed through the forsaken and forgotten town, and the public suddenly discovered that Port St. Joe, as it is

called, was an interesting and ideal winter resort. So once more St. Joseph may stage a come-back. Once more it may become famed, perhaps not as the richest and wickedest city in Florida, but as one of the most popular and progressive. *Quien sabe?* as the Spaniards say.

It was not far from St. Joseph that one of the most remarkable and most tragic occurrences in the history of Florida took place. When Andrew Jackson captured Pensacola in 1814, the British, as already related, retired to Apalachicola and there built up fortifications beside the river at some distance from its mouth. Protected by an impenetrable swamp in the rear and with the river in front, well and strongly built and mounting nine heavy guns of the latest design, the fort erected by Colonel Nichols and his troops was well nigh impregnable. The Colonel, however, had no intention of endeavoring to maintain a British stronghold on Spanish soil once the Yanks under General Jackson had cemented a strong bond of friendship with the Spaniards by driving out the British interlopers and handing Pensacola back to Spain. He realized that he was cut off from his countrymen, that he was in the heart of the enemy's country and, most of all, that the war was practically at an end with the advantage all on the side of the Americans. So having no further use for his fort on the Apalachicola, Colonel Nichols presented it, guns, ammunition and all, to his Indian allies and sailed away from Florida with no regrets.

But the Indians had no more use for a fort than had the British, and, having helped themselves to what ammunition and supplies and commodities they could

use, they deserted the fortifications and returned to their tribal villages.

Scarcely had they vanished when a band of runaway Negro slaves appeared, and, finding the fort abandoned, they promptly took possession. At this time the Florida wilderness was figuratively speaking alive with these black renegades. Some had found shelter among the Indians, but as a rule they were not welcomed by the aborigines and only when joining forces against their common enemies, the white men, were they on friendly terms. As a result, the fugitive blacks who, for two centuries, had been escaping from Spanish, French, British and American masters, had formed independent bands of semi-savages and had increased and multiplied until over one thousand were living in western Florida along the Apalachicola River and its tributaries. Here, under their own chiefs, they had their villages, cultivating little gardens and raising a few cattle, with over three hundred warriors ready to do battle, to raid or to massacre with all the savagery of their African ancestors, whenever occasion or opportunity arose.

When word was passed that the British had abandoned their fort the blacks lost no time in making it their headquarters. Again and again they launched forays on the settlers and the outlying towns. Homes were burned, farms destroyed, and men, women and children were butchered without mercy or were carried off to a fate worse than death. The settlers were helpless in the face of this new menace, the entire countryside was in a state of terror, and the Spanish Governor was utterly unable to cope with the situation.

As many of the victims of the renegades' atrocities were Americans, President Madison felt that something must be done to end the unthinkable state of affairs. He authorized General Andrew Jackson to do it. Securing permission from the Spanish Governor of West Florida to send an armed force into his territory, General Jackson selected General Gaines and Colonel Clinch to proceed against the Negro stronghold which had been enlarged and strengthened until its defenders felt that they could defy any force sent against them, and had planned to establish an independent Negro nation or kingdom in Florida.

For a time it looked as if the Negroes were right. The fortress, with its massive walls fifteen feet in height and eighteen feet thick, was proof against any artillery the Americans could bring to bear. The impassable swamp in the rear prevented them from making a land attack, and the nine heavy cannon on the parapets swept the river and the surrounding terrain. For days the siege continued. How long the Negro warriors might have repelled the American troops and their gunboats had it not been for a lucky accident, no one can say. But a fortunate or rather a chance shot from one of the gunboats struck a magazine inside the fort.

Instantly there was a terrific explosion; masonry and timbers, mutilated and dismembered bodies, guns and weapons were hurled high in air; great cracks were riven in the massive walls and guns were thrown from their mounts. When the smoke had cleared away and the Americans rushed within the fort they found that of the 335 occupants 275 had been killed and only three

remained unwounded. The victory was complete and, in addition to having utterly destroyed the murderous blacks, the Americans took over two hundred thousand dollars' worth of booty which had been accumulated by the marauding bands, and one hundred and sixty barrels of powder, which had miraculously withstood the explosion that had destroyed over six hundred barrels of powder and three thousand stand of arms.

Before leaving Apalachicola and such bloody deeds of war and violence we must not forget another occurrence which was of a thousand, yes a million, times' greater importance and benefit to the human race than the destruction of the runaway Negroes' fort. This was the invention of artificial ice making by Dr. John Gorrie at Apalachicola in 1855.

Although Florida cannot claim Dr. Gorrie as a native son, for he was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and had resided only twenty years in Florida when he made his epochal invention, yet he was unquestionably a Floridian at the time. To be sure, artificial ice was nothing new, for it had been produced in small or experimental quantities for more than one hundred years. But Dr. Gorrie was the first to perfect and patent a method of producing ice on a commercial basis for ordinary use. Moreover, his discovery did not result from his efforts to make ice but was brought about by his attempts to provide a cooling system for Florida hospitals.

His first demonstration, the first time in history when artificial ice was put to practical use, was on an occasion when a number of wealthy American and English ship

owners were holding a banquet. The ice to be used was to be brought in a vessel from Maine, and when she failed to arrive consternation reigned. But at this juncture Dr. Gorrie stepped into the breach, provided artificial ice, and made the banquet an immense success. Yet, as is so often the case, Dr. Gorrie received no recognition for his great achievement until many years after his death, and his name is not even referred to in the article on refrigeration in the current editions of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Always, where chaotic conditions exist and a country is in a period of transition, strange and quixotic, paradoxical and picaresque characters make their appearance on the scene; and Florida was no exception to the rule. Soldiers of fortune, filibusters, swashbuckling adventurers and out-and-out scoundrels though they may have been, yet in their makeup and their deeds there is a certain fascination; in them the spirit of the old cavaliers lived again; they seem to have stepped out of the long-dead past and we can forgive their rascality for the romance with which they surrounded it.

Such a one was McGregor, who established an independent state on Florida's east coast; but there were others equally interesting and unusual whose brief and meteoric careers flamed across the pages of Florida's turbulent history, and who played their parts in the making of the state. There was Alexander McGillivray the half-breed—whose father was a canny Scotch trader and whose mother was a Creek Indian squaw—who was commissioned as a colonel in the British army during the Revolution. Astute, of unusual intelligence, with



the fighting blood of Highlanders and Indian warriors in his veins, combining the business instincts of the Scotch with the poetic imagery of the aborigine, McGillivray dreamed of creating a free and independent nation in west Florida.

Once peace had been declared between England and her victorious colonies, the Scotch-Indian Colonel sought an audience with the Spanish Governor of Florida—who, by the way, bore the decidedly un-Castilian name of O'Neil—and outlined his plan. At that time the citizens of the newborn United States were groaning under terrific taxes imposed by Congress to enable the government to liquidate the forty-two million dollar debt incurred by the war. As a result, there was serious discontent, especially in the South and West, and secession had been proposed and discussed quite openly.

Pointing out that as an Indian chief on his mother's side he could count on the Creeks to support him, McGillivray proposed to form an alliance between them and the dissatisfied whites, and to establish an independent nation in Florida. So convincingly did he argue the advantages of such an arrangement, so eloquently did he speak, that Governor O'Neil was convinced that the scheme was feasible and would prove the solution to many vexed problems.

Accordingly a congress of the Spanish officials met at Pensacola and on the last day of May, 1783, a treaty was drawn up and signed by the Spanish authorities and McGillivray. Under this treaty the Scotch-Indian ex-Colonel was granted the right to carry out his

scheme and was given the title of Commissary General with a salary of about fifty dollars per month—which in those days and at that time was not so ridiculous as it sounds today. But the McGillivray state never materialized, and the Commissary General lived but ten years. He died in 1793, a rich man for his times, with an estate of sixty slaves, over three hundred head of cattle, two hundred horses and a considerable sum in cash. He was buried with full Masonic rites at Pensacola.

At the time that McGillivray was planning his free state under the Spanish flag, another romantic and remarkable character made his appearance on the Florida stage. A native of Maryland, William Augustus Bowles had lived most of his life in Jamaica, where he became an ensign in the British army, and as such he had been assigned to the English garrison at Pensacola. Apparently Young Bowles was something of a hot-headed, independent subaltern—as was later demonstrated by his hectic career—for he was soon cashiered from the army for insubordination.

Doubtless young Bowles welcomed the expulsion from His Majesty's forces, for assuredly the humdrum life of a garrison post, the strict military discipline and the endless routine must have been torture to such a free, adventurous and romantic soul. Once free he immediately joined the Indians in the vicinity, married a Creek woman, bent all his energies and talents to learning his wife's language, adopted the Indians' mode of life, their religion and their habits, and soon became such a prime favorite that he was elected a full chief.

Oddly enough he appears to have held no resentment

toward the British, but his hatred for the Spanish was, if anything, even greater and more bitter than that of his adopted tribesmen. And on the occasion when Pensacola was attacked by the Spaniards he summoned his Creek warriors, led them against the Dons, and saved the day for the English forces. As a reward, he received full pardon for his former offenses.

Whether he felt that his services were no longer required by the British in western Florida, whether he had adopted the life of a savage merely as an antidote for his wounded pride, because it was such a contrast to the life he had been living, or as a means of expressing himself, will never be known. But, at all events, he suddenly decided to return to a state of civilization, and, deserting his Indian friends and family, he sailed for Nassau. At the Bahaman capital he won applause and a measure of fame as an actor, became a fast friend of the Governor, Lord Dunmore, and from His Excellency he received a commission authorizing him to establish a British trading post on the Chattahoochee River.

Here the paths of the half-breed Creek chieftain and the white Creek chief crossed for the first time when McGillivray, on friendly terms with the Spanish authorities, and Bowles, a deadly enemy of all Spaniards, met. There were sharp words; Creek, Scotch and good English epithets flew thick and fast, and for a space it looked as if open hostilities would result. But the Indian blood won, and Bowles, obeying McGillivray's commands, sailed back to Nassau. Once more His Excellency came to Bowles' aid and commissioned him to

secure a number of Indian chiefs, representing the Creeks, Cherokees and other Florida tribes, and with them proceed to England where he was to spread propaganda for an alliance between the British and the Indians in case of war with the United States which, even at that time, was looming on the horizon.

His mission accomplished, Bowles and his Indians sailed for America, but being a restless soul who never permitted time to pass idly, he busied himself and his dusky companions by teaching the tribesmen seamanship. Like most of their race they proved excellent sailors, and a brilliant idea entered the fertile brain of friend Bowles. To him excitement was as the breath of life; he hated the Spaniards, and he was woefully in need of funds. And here was the opportunity to find the excitement he craved, to even scores with the Dons, and to recoup his fortunes at one and the same time by the simple expedient of turning pirate.

So, with a crew of Indians at his back, Bowles hoisted the black flag and proceeded to prey upon the Spanish shipping. Several richly laden vessels were taken, their cargoes were landed at remote points on the Gulf coast, and what Bowles did not require himself he bestowed upon his Indian friends, thus firmly establishing himself in their esteem and winning their full support.

Poor McGillivray saw his roseate dreams rapidly fading. His Creeks were deserting him for his piratical rival, and he was beginning to find that his Indians were favoring an alliance with the British rather than with the Spanish. Bowles was in the ascendancy, and realizing his helplessness in the face of this unexpected

development McGillivray appealed to the Spanish authorities for help. As a result, Bowles was captured and was sent, a prisoner, to Havana and thence to Spain.

Here, instead of being cast into a dungeon or treated with harshness and being punished for his offenses against Spain and her subjects in Florida, he was received like a hero, was treated with deference and was offered full pardon, a princely sum in gold and an officer's commission in the Spanish army if he would ally himself and his Indians with Spain.

But Bowles, whatever his faults and shortcomings, was no traitor. He flatly and contemptuously refused to consider such a proposal, and as a result he was sent in chains to Manila where he remained a prisoner for seven years. Then orders came to send him back to Spain, but when the ship on which he was being transported put in at the island of Ascension he managed to escape. Making himself known to the Governor of this British colony in the South Atlantic, Bowles secured passage to England where he was fêted and lionized and became a protégé of Sir William Pitt the Prime Minister, and the Duke of Portland.

But an easy life in London soon palled upon him. He longed for the wide open spaces, and his hatred of the Spaniards had been intensified by his imprisonment. So once again he left civilization behind and was soon plying his old trade of piracy on the Gulf coast in the vicinity of Apalachicola. Piracy, however, was not as lucrative as it had been, and Bowles, learning that his old enemy McGillivray had died, decided to

establish an Indian kingdom. Finding his former allies, the Creeks, were not over-enthusiastic about the scheme, he turned to the Seminoles who, being sworn enemies of the Creeks, readily joined him. With these allies and a number of white adventurers and soldiers of fortune, Bowles announced himself "Director General of the Muscogeas." Soon thereafter he captured a ship laden with useful and valuable commodities, a quantity of arms and ammunition and considerable treasure. By distributing these he won the adherence of still more Indians and white men, and with this little army of three hundred Seminoles and about one hundred whites he attacked St. Marks fort near Tallahassee. For nearly two months he besieged the fort until, faced with starvation, the Spaniards surrendered and were allowed to march away without molestation.

With the fort as a nucleus and stronghold Bowles felt that the world was his and declared himself the "King of Florida." But both Spain and the United States had other ideas. Bowles was not only a menace to the peace of Florida but was an out-and-out pirate, and the governments combined to destroy him and his kingdom. For a time he defied the united forces of the two powers; but, when nine Spanish warships appeared and prepared to shell his fort, he realized the truth of the old maxim and, deserting his fort and his Indian allies, after telling them to help themselves to the ammunition and supplies, he vanished.

But not for long. He had double-crossed the Indians; from being a revered chief he had become known as the "Leader who Lies," and a short time after his

abandonment of the fort he was seized by the Indians and given into the hands of the Spaniards who promptly sent him to Havana where he was cast into a cell in the Morro.

With all his dreams shattered, deserted by his former friends, feared and hated by the Spaniards and detested by the Indians he had betrayed, Bowles realized that his career was at an end. Life held nothing for him and, rather than suffer the mental and physical torture of indefinite imprisonment, he determined to hasten his end by refusing all food.

However, even starvation and imprisonment in a dungeon could not break his spirit or his contempt and hatred of the Spaniards. Told that the Governor of Cuba planned to call to see him, Bowles, too weak to stand, raised himself on one elbow and his lips curled.

"Tell His Excellency," he snarled, "that low as I have fallen I have not yet sunk so far as to receive the Governor of Cuba."

They were the last words he ever uttered. Sinking back with a curse upon all Spaniards on his dying lips, he passed away.

It was at St. Marks, where Bowles established himself as King of Florida, that an incident took place which came near involving the United States and England in a breach of diplomatic relations if not actual warfare. Just as the loss of an ear by an obscure British seaman named Jenkins brought on a nine years' war between England and Spain, so the hanging of two British scallawags bade fair to bring on a war between

England and the United States. That the hanging was amply justified did not palliate matters in the eyes of the British, any more than did the fact that Jenkins' ear was sliced off as penalty for being a smuggler.

Very probably at another time the execution of the two men would have aroused no protest, but matters were still a trifle delicate following the War of 1812, and the British strongly resented the United States' activities in Florida, perhaps realizing, too late, what a mistake they had made in trading it back to Spain in exchange for the Bahamas.

Although at this time no definite agreement had been made nor any treaty signed, yet it was well understood by both Spain and the United States that Florida must pass from Spanish hands in the very near future. Spain's control was scarcely more than theoretical, for by 1817 organized government had almost ceased to exist in Florida beyond the limits of the larger towns. McGregor had seized Amelia Island and had established a little kingdom frequented by pirates and convicts. In various parts of the peninsula there had been Indian outrages, and settlers had been murdered, and it was obvious that these outbreaks had been instigated by white men who had supplied arms and ammunition to the Indians.

As a result of all this, General Andrew Jackson was given almost free rein to take whatever action he felt was necessary to establish law and order in Florida, and to protect the lives and property of American citizens dwelling there, even to virtually taking possession of the country. Having broken up McGregor's nest of



pirates and smugglers, General Jackson prepared to suppress the malcontent Indians. At Mikosukee (sometimes spelled Micksosuckee) three hundred scalps of white men, women and children were found drying in the sun, and at every Indian village there was equally obvious evidence of the Indians' outrages.

Learning from some of the Indians that white men near St. Marks had been supplying liquor and weapons and inciting the Indians to attack Americans, General Jackson proceeded to the locality and captured two traders red-handed. One, a man named Arbuthnot, was taken at St. Marks; the other, named Ambrister, who had served as a lieutenant in the British forces under Colonel Nichols during the War of 1812, was taken at Suwanee. Although there was no question of their nefarious activities, they were given a fair trial, convicted and promptly hanged.

Just why this act of summary justice should have aroused such a storm of protest and vituperation in England is something of a mystery, the more especially as not a few British subjects had fallen victims to Indians incited to murder by the executed scoundrels. Possibly it was due to the fact that Ambrister had been an officer of the British army. Whatever the reason, correspondence between the governments became voluminous, arguments for and against Jackson waxed hot on both sides of the Atlantic, and page after page of the *Congressional Records* are filled with the case. Not until England realized that by her defense of the two unspeakable villains she was tacitly approving of



*Courtesy U. S. Navy, and Pensacola Chamber of Commerce*

SCENIC HIGHWAY AT PENSACOLA



their actions and encouraging others did she drop the matter.

In the meantime many British subjects in Florida, probably fearing they might be the next to suffer for their sins, hastily left for the Bahamas. Others suspected of having had a part in the Indians' activities were requested to leave the country for the country's good, and, in the Bahamas, where there were no Indians to be supplied with fire water and firearms in return for furs and plumes, turned their talents to other and possibly more respectable transactions.

Of all the towns on Florida's Gulf Coast, Tampa is perhaps the best known and the most interesting from a historical standpoint. Also it is an important port, a great cigar-making center, a favorite winter resort, and the shipping point for vast quantities of sponges. Moreover, Tampa boasts of the actual tree in whose shade Hernando de Soto sought shelter from the sun in 1539, and watched his men disembarking in preparation for their ill-fated trek into the unknown wilderness. Whether the ancient live oak standing in the grounds of the Tampa Bay Hotel is the same tree that sheltered the discoverer of the Mississippi is open to question.

Doubtless there were scores of lordly live oaks on the shores of Tampa Bay when De Soto landed there nearly four centuries ago, and which of the many was the one under which he stood would be a difficult matter for even him to decide. But the "De Soto Oak" is certainly

old enough to have cast an abundance of shade in De Soto's time, and as long as it stood there as one of the grove wherein he pitched his camp, everyone should be satisfied. Even if doubting Thomases and incredulous visitors question the validity of the famous oak's claims, they cannot raise the issue when it comes to the spring where De Soto slaked his thirst, for the spring, which De Soto christened Espiritu Santo, still gushes from the earth near Clearwater across the harbor from Tampa.

Historically, Tampa holds nothing of interest, other than the De Soto Oak, for no moldering ruins, no ancient buildings link this city with the past and Tampa is more widely known for the tarpon and other game fish in its waters than as the landing place of De Soto.

The large number of Cuban residents give it a slightly foreign atmosphere and at Ybor City, the Cuban-Spanish quarter, one steps from the United States directly into Latin America. Why go to Cuba? Why, indeed, when the color, the life, the exotic atmosphere, even the smells of Havana are here on Florida's soil? Dark-eyed señoritas, usually overweight, and swarthy, blue-jowled men are on every side; everywhere are Spanish signs, and the chatter and parrot-like tones of the women fill the market with a babel of Spanish. To add luster to the scene, and to supply an added touch of Hispanic atmosphere for the benefit of tourists, girls with high tortoise shell combs draped with lacy mantillas mingle with the guests at the sidewalk cafés.

And when one wearies of Spanish and Spanish-

American food and surroundings one may visit Greece by driving northward a few miles to Tarpon Springs, the center of the world's largest sponge fishery, with the largest Greek colony in America. It is difficult to believe that one is in Florida and not on the shores of the Mediterranean as one wanders along the busy, noisy waterfront where thousands of sponges of every size and shape are being unloaded by the swarthy, gesticulating, picturesque spongers, and where the fleet of bright-colored sponge schooners may be seen resting on the turquoise water with its fringe of waving palms.

At Tarpon Springs it is not unusual for a day's sale of sponges to total over fifty thousand dollars, and a million dollars' worth are often brought in and sold during a single year. One marvels where and how such vast quantities are used, for although Tarpon Springs is the largest sponge market in the entire world, vast quantities are shipped from Nassau, Key West, Cuba, the Mediterranean, the Orient, Japan and elsewhere. And despite the fact that rubber and other substitutes for sponges have proved popular, and one rarely sees a sponge in a modern bathroom, yet the demand for sponges is increasing rather than decreasing. To the average person a sponge is a sponge and its use is restricted to washing human and automobile bodies. But there are many other and more important uses for sponges. Surgeons still find them indispensable; they are used in manufacturing linoleum and sound-proof materials for radio broadcasting studios and offices, for padding clothing, for mattresses, for fertilizers, for cleaning garments, for cleaning windows; and vast

quantities are employed in glass factories, for sponge is the only known material that can be used for wiping off hot glass. Cloth, leather, all other known materials burn or char, but sponge is fireproof and is not affected by the heat.

There are almost as many varieties and qualities of sponges as there are uses for them. At Tarpon Springs only four varieties are sold. The coarsest and cheapest is the "wire" sponge, the next in the scale of value is the "grass" sponge, still more valuable is the "yellow" sponge, while the best of all is the "wool" sponge. But the market value of each of these depends upon the size, the texture, the care with which it has been cured and the demand and supply. As a result, sponges are always auctioned off, and at Tarpon Springs these sales are conducted in coöperative warehouses maintained by the sponge fishers; for the Greek spongers are a businesslike lot and, unlike the spongers of the Bahamas, they have systematized and modernized their industry. While the Bahamans still employ old-fashioned and primitive methods, and "hook" their sponges from the bottom of sea in shallow water, the Greeks of Florida use diving gear and secure their catch from deep water sixty to eighty miles from land. It is an impressive and interesting sight to witness the departure of the fleet with the bearded priest of the Greek Church blessing each boat and with friends and families of the fishermen bidding them emotional farewells. But the real "sight" of this greatest of sponge markets is the ceremony held each January at the Feast of the Epiphany.

From far and near, from every part of the United

States, devout Greeks and members of the Orthodox Church gather at Tarpon Springs to take part in the rites. Following the service at the Church of St. Nicholas, the procession, led by the ranking prelate in his quaint and picturesque robes, winds slowly, with swinging censers and chanting voices, to Spring Bayou for the great event of the day. Standing by the side of the sea, the priest casts a golden crucifix into the water, thus symbolizing the baptism of Christ. Then, after the reading of the Gospel of St. Matthew, a snow-white dove is set free to symbolize the Holy Ghost.

The strictly religious ceremonies thus end, and with shouts and laughter young Greek divers, whose physical perfection would put our best athletes to shame, plunge into the ocean in a contest to retrieve the golden cross. The fortunate one is the envy of all the colony, for upon him is bestowed a special blessing of the Church which, so the fishermen devoutly believe, insures a big season's catch and safety in his perilous calling.

Before leaving Tarpon Springs the visitor who is a lover of art should not fail to see the magnificent paintings of George Inness which, instead of being housed in a gallery, are in the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Even those who find no interest in art or in the sponge fishers and their picturesque ceremony will find abundant interests and activities to occupy mind and body at Tarpon Springs. There are out-of-doors recreations aplenty; some of the finest fishing in the world tempts the angling fraternity, and the numerous lagoons and bayous are charming spots for boating and picnic parties.

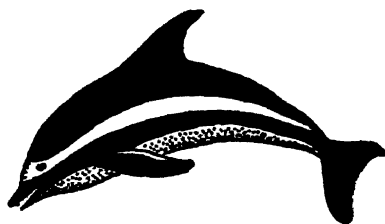


Although Tampa was first visited by Europeans when Narváez landed at the Indian village of Tampa in 1528, yet the present city was not founded until 1823, when a company of troops from Pensacola were stationed here. And it was not until the late eighties that Tampa was anything more than a village. But with the advent of the railway and the popularity of Florida as a winter resort, the growth of the city became phenomenal, and today it is not only the metropolis of the Gulf coast but is an important world's port and a busy commercial and industrial center. More "Havana" cigars are manufactured in Tampa than in Cuba, its commerce is astounding, and it is one of the most popular of Florida winter resorts with palatial hotels, magnificent private residences, delightful parks, splendid avenues, and with the world's longest bridge (the Gandy bridge, five miles in length) stretching across the bay to St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg is well and appropriately called the "Sunshine City," for the sun shines for 360 days in the year and a premium is offered for every day on which no sunlight streams down upon its streets. Like Tampa, it is a new city, in fact much newer than its neighbor across the bay, for it is less than fifty years of age and has no romantic or historical background. For that matter, half a century ago the entire Gulf coast of Florida south of Tampa was an almost unknown expanse of beaches, lagoons, island-dotted bays and dense jungle, its only settlements scattered Indian villages, its only white inhabitants the small garrisons of a few forts and occasional fishermen and plume hunters. But today it is traversed by a splendid motor highway and a railway

and is dotted with villages and towns with **luxurious** hotels, airports and all the other modern **luxuries** and necessities.

Among the many delightful cities which have sprung up along this entrancing gulf coast is Sarasota, a town planned and laid out by professional experts, and a tourist paradise. But Sarasota's chief claim to fame is the fact that it possesses America's first golf course, which was laid out in 1885 by J. Hamilton Gillispie of Dumfrieshire, Scotland. Also, Sarasota is noted as being the winter quarters of the World's Greatest Show, the Ringling Brothers Circus and menagerie. But the most important and valuable of all Sarasota's possessions is its magnificent Art Museum. Here, in an immense building of Hispano-Moorish design, with long shady colonnades about a huge patio of green lawns and ornamental trees, is housed one of the largest and most priceless collections of statuary, paintings and other objects of art in all America—all built, collected and maintained by the Ringlings, probably the only public institution in the world that has been established on the profits from a circus.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE KING OF THE PIRATES

The haunt of the pirates. The strange story of José Gaspar. Gasparilla, the pirate king. The patron saint of Tampa. Tales of pirates' loot. A building built by pirates' treasure. Last of the Gulf pirates. Billy Bowlegs and his treasure.

IN days gone by this Gulf coast of Florida with its many bays and lagoons, its numerous keys and islets, and its tortuous channels was a favorite haunt of the pirates. Here they could lie safely hidden in snug harbors known only to themselves, protected by bars or shoals over which war vessels could not pass, and from their lairs they could dash out and attack the treasure-laden ships bound across the Gulf from Mexico to Spain, or merchant vessels with rich cargoes sailing to or from New Orleans and other Gulf ports. And on the wooded islets and the sandy shores beneath the palms they roistered and made merry, careened their swift craft, and maintained friendly relations with the Indians.

It is impossible to say how many of the scoundrels made their headquarters about Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Apalachicola Bay, St. Josephs and St. Andrews Bay and Pensacola; but all these spots were veritable pirates' nests, and the most famous pirate of the lot was Gasparilla.

Of all the pirates of the nineteenth century Gasparilla was the most picturesque, the most colorful and

the most spectacular. Deep-dyed villain that he was, yet so much of glamour and romance and story has been woven about his name and fame that he has been adopted as a sort of patron saint by Tampa, and each year his memory and his deeds are perpetuated in a carnival, at which time the pirate chieftain, José Gaspar or Captain Gasparilla, comes ashore with his roistering crew (impersonated by the law-abiding citizens) and takes possession of the city. It is a strange and unique custom, for nowhere else in the world is a most villainous and murderous pirate honored by being fêted and entertained and given the freedom of the city—even if only by proxy. But then Captain José Gaspar was a unique pirate, a most spectacular character, a real piratical king, with all the courtly manners of a grandee, ever dressed in the height of fashion, as handsome as any maiden's dream-prince, and educated as befitted an aristocrat of Spain, which he was by birthright.

Born in 1756, the scion of an old and highly respected family, José entered the Spanish navy and, by his superior ability, signal bravery and remarkable seamanship, rose rapidly. Doubtless, had he been content to follow an honest career, he would eventually have become an admiral. But José was the black sheep of the family, and honesty was not one of his virtues. Selected as a trustworthy messenger, he was given a package containing most precious gems belonging to the Crown, and being unable or unwilling to resist temptation he helped himself to some of the jewels. Naturally the loss of the gems was discovered; José was known to be the thief, and, with the law hot at his heels, and the galleys

or worse staring him in the face, he stole a ship, put to sea, and, winning over the crew by his superior intellect, his flow of language and his personality, he hoisted the black flag and turned pirate.

Heading westward for the Spanish Main with its rich pickings, Gasparilla, as he now called himself, decided that a proper pirate should have a proper setting, so he searched about for a likely spot wherein to establish himself. His choice fell upon the bay now known as Charlotte Harbor, and here, on a little isle now named Gasparilla Island, he landed men and guns, built a fort and a palatial residence and declared himself King of the Pirates. None dared dispute his self-established claim to the title.

Already his fame as a desperate character, an indomitable fighter and a merciless foe had spread far and near among the honest merchant seamen and the pirates as well. He was a dead shot with pistol or musket, a master swordsman, and he possessed an almost uncanny skill in handling the long guns that fairly bristled from his ship's sides. In a short time he was everywhere recognized by the piratical fraternity as the most notorious, most daring and most successful of pirate leaders, and scores of lesser lights flocked to his standard, until he virtually controlled the entire pirate industry of the Gulf of Mexico.

Thoroughly believing in the old adage that dead men tell no tales, Gasparilla saw to it that every male aboard the ships he captured was thoroughly dead, unless willing to turn pirate and join his crew. But the women he always spared—not from any tenderness of

heart or pity or through chivalry, but to serve as additional members of his harem. Just how many unfortunate females were maintained in luxurious confinement in Gasparilla's regal palace on the island has never been recorded; but he lived like an Oriental potentate, the treasure he took from looted ships was stupendous, and with lavish hand he showered jewels and fine raiment, golden baubles and feminine luxuries upon his favorites. But like a Sultan or a Bashaw he tired quickly of his lady friends, and, grandiosely presenting those whose charms no longer entertained him to his men and the lesser leaders in piracy, he constantly replaced them with more recent acquisitions. No doubt many a fair captive was not over averse to entering the seraglio of the courtly and handsome pirate king; others unquestionably resisted and were compelled to submit to the inevitable. On occasion, Gasparilla found himself in possession of some lovely lady of quality, and, recognizing her as his equal or superior by birth or station, and still retaining in his quixotic makeup a trace of Castilian gallantry and chivalry, he would treat such an aristocratic prisoner with deference and would strive to win her favor and affection by courting her like any ardent swain. But he was an egotistical scoundrel and nothing maddened him more than to be humiliated. He was literally "as proud as a Spanish grandee," and death without mercy was the portion of anyone who wittingly or unwittingly injured his self-esteem.

On one occasion, in 1801, when cruising near Boca Grande, he sighted a Spanish galleon and immediately

spread all sail in chase of the prize. The race was short; a shot from the pirates' long bow gun crashed through the galleon's rigging, bringing down spars and sails; and, swarming aboard the helpless vessel, Gasparilla and his crew of cutthroats cut down and pistoled the terror-stricken Spaniards without mercy until not a man remained alive aboard the galleon.

The captured vessel proved a rich prize and contained a vast treasure in gold and silver from the mines and mints of Mexico, and in addition a bevy of beautiful young ladies and a Spanish princess. Inviting his ruffians to help themselves to the screaming, weeping girls, Gasparilla approached the princess and, doffing his plumed hat, placed his hand and heart at her feet. But the princess, despite the pirate chieftain's obviously aristocratic blood, his fine manners, his courtly speech and his handsome face, regarded him merely as a murderer and a thief and so told him in no uncertain tones.

Gasparilla had expected a rebuff at his first approach and, fully appreciating the well-known fact that a prize hard won is the more delectable, he merely smiled, bowed, and invited the princess to accept the hospitality of his humble home. As she had no choice in the matter there was nothing to do but make the best of it, though she left the pirate king in no doubt as to her contempt and disgust for a Spaniard who had fallen so low as to turn pirate and prey upon the ships of his countrymen. For a time Gasparilla bore her taunts and epithets with truly remarkable forbearance, and assiduously made love to his royal captive. But at last, finding her cold and unresponsive, and smarting under

her insults, he gave up and, drawing his pistol, shot her through the heart.

Although King Gasparilla had had things all his own way for several years, and had become the scourge of the Gulf and the neighboring seas, he could not continue his depredations indefinitely. The Powers were awakening to the need of sweeping the pirates from the seas, and almost daily word reached Gasparilla of piratical friends captured and hanged and their nests raided and destroyed. Once again in his career the law was altogether too close to him for comfort, and by 1821 he decided that to remain longer in his lair, openly defying the world, was to court disaster. So calling his men together, he divided the booty, amounting to over thirty millions in gold and silver, boarded his flagship and prepared to sail away with his share of the loot and his favorite concubines. However, he had waited too long. Just as the pirates were heaving up anchor a large ship was sighted entering the bay. Apparently she was an unsuspecting British merchantman, and Gasparilla, deciding to have one last fling at piracy, at once prepared to attack her; but before he could slip his cable or fire a gun the American flag fluttered to her masthead, a broadside thundered from her hidden guns and round shot screeched and crashed through hull and rigging of the pirate ship. Men fell dead and wounded, spars came tumbling down, splinters flew and guns were dismounted. There was no chance to escape, no hope of offering resistance, but Gasparilla would not submit to being captured. Seizing a piece of chain cable he wound it about his waist, shouted de-



fiance at his foes and leaped into the sea—brave and spectacular to the last. A fitting exit for the King of the Pirates.

As might be expected, there are countless tales of pirates' loot hidden on the beaches, in the sands and on the keys of western Florida. No doubt many have their foundation in fact, but others unquestionably are purely fabulous and are figments of fertile imaginations. Unquestionably pirates *did* cache some of their ill-gotten gains on Florida's shores, and I have been told on excellent authority that one business block in Pensacola was paid for with gold and silver which a lucky finder disinterred from its hiding place in the vicinity. Many of the stories of buried treasure one hears relate to riches alleged to have been secreted by Gasparilla, but I greatly doubt that the picturesque King of the Pirates ever cached any of his loot. He captured almost incalculable treasures, to be sure; but he was a lavish spendthrift, he lived like a genuine king, and a harem is an expensive luxury even though its inmates are prisoners dragged from sinking ships. Moreover, since Gasparilla was preparing to slip away and, no doubt, lead an honest life on the proceeds of his piracy, when he met his end, he had all of his share of accumulated treasure on his ship with him. So there is no reason to suppose that he had left any of his wealth concealed on the shores to which he was about to bid a fond farewell.

But there was another and almost equally spectacular and remarkable pirate, although far less famed than Gasparilla, who plied his trade in the Gulf and who *did*

bury treasures on Florida shores. Moreover, his ship was sunk, with her hold full of rich, hand-picked gold ore, in one of the bays on the Gulf coast of Florida, and lies there in comparatively shallow water today, while there is no question that his fortune still lies hidden under Florida sands.

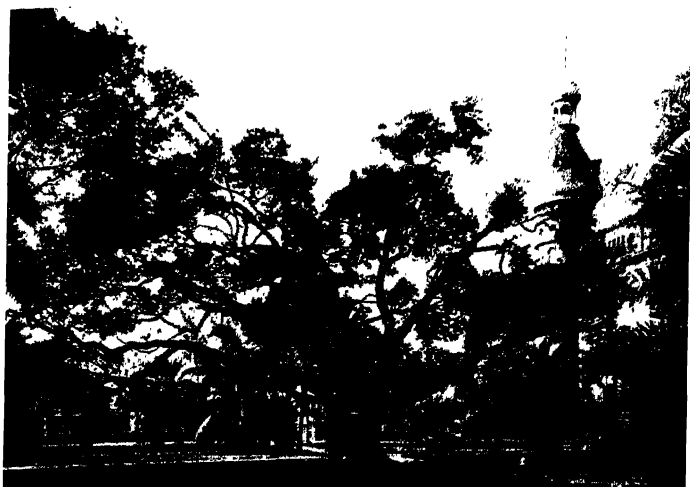
Just who he was no one knows, but he was English, and under the name of William Rogers he appeared in New Orleans about 1810 and bought a plantation about seventy-five miles from the city. Soon after his arrival he married a woman of the Choctaw tribe and, in due course of time, four sons and two daughters were added to the Rogers family. Evidently, however, the rather monotonous routine of a planter's life did not appeal to friend Rogers, and, leaving his plantation in the capable hands of his wife and offspring, he went off adventuring and joined the Lafitte brothers at Batavia. With them he took a part in the Battle of New Orleans, for which the Lafittes and all their men received Federal pardons; and with the abandonment of the famous smugglers' settlement, Rogers, or Billy Bowlegs as he was now called, decided to carry on for himself.

For his headquarters he selected Santa Rosa Sound. Then, gathering together a few of the Lafittes' old hands, and acquiring three small vessels, he established himself as a smuggler, with piracy as a side line. It was an ideal spot for carrying on a nefarious trade—a maze of creeks, bayous, islands and hidden coves, with an abundance of timber ashore, and teeming with fish and game. Feeling that he was perfectly safe from the long

arm of the law, and finding the smuggling game not over remunerative, Billy Bowlegs soon became an out-an-out pirate and confined his smuggling to running his ill-gotten cargoes into the nearby ports.

To Rogers all ships were fair prey, and he attacked any and all that promised profit, although Spanish vessels were his specialty, owing to the fact that they carried richer cargoes than those of France, England or the United States. At that time vast quantities of bullion were being transported from Mexico, Panama and elsewhere to Spain, and rich pickings were to be had for the taking. To be sure, the taking was not a safe or an easy matter. The plate ships were always convoyed by powerful heavily armed frigates, and the ordinary sneaking type of pirates who infested the Gulf and the Caribbean gave the convoys a wide berth. But not so Billy Bowlegs. He was no coward, whatever his other shortcomings. He had become as bold and ruthless and as dangerous a freebooter as ever trod the deck of a buccaneer's ship; and, realizing fully that his own life and career depended upon secrecy as to his activities, he burned or scuttled every ship he took and saw to it that no survivors were left to carry tales to the authorities ashore.

For this reason it is impossible to state how many vessels were taken by this last of the Gulf pirates, but that he was a thoroughly dreaded corsair is proved by the records, and that he was most successful in his activities is proved by the fact that in a few short years he amassed an immense fortune. But like his contemporary, Gasparilla, Billy Bowlegs realized that the



*tesy of the Chamber of Commerce, Tampa*

# THE DE SOTO OAK, TAMPA



*irtesy of the Chamber of Commerce, Tampa*

# THE GASPARILLA FIESTA, TAMPA

sel's bulwarks and hull; many of the sails were torn to ribbons, and the ship was leaking badly from round shot wounds 'twixt wind and water.

However, the schooner was still seaworthy, and with patched rigging and spars she could still show a clean pair of heels to anything of her size on the Gulf. So deciding he had enough for one cruise, Billy Bowlegs squared away for his lair on the western coast of Florida. For once, however, his luck deserted him. A British sloop-of-war was sighted, and, quite rightly assuming that a schooner in the condition of Billy's had been engaged in no honest venture, the British captain instantly gave chase. It was no weather for a crippled ship; there was a gale of wind blowing; a heavy sea was running, and the pirate realized that to attempt to outrun the warship under such conditions would be hopeless. But he held an ace up his sleeve, as the saying goes. Within a few miles ahead there was a snug harbor, a large bay protected by a bar which the warship could not cross, but which was easily navigated by the shoal-draft schooner.

So piling on all the canvas which he felt his crippled spars could stand, Billy Bowlegs drove off before the gale. But the wind, which had now increased to almost hurricane force, and which carried him reeling and plunging through the big rollers, proved his Nemesis. The waves were breaking heavily on the shallow bar at the entrance to the bay, and although the schooner made the passage she struck bottom several times and each time the shock carried away rigging and top-hamper, while green water and seething foam washed

her from stern to stem, carrying away deck fittings and drowning several of the crew. Yet when she at last reached the calm water of the lagoon she still floated, apparently little the worse for the hammering she had received, and was brought to an anchorage beyond the range of the warship's guns.

But the British pirate-chasers did not intend to let Billy Bowlegs and his crew escape so easily, and backing her yards the corvette lowered away boats filled with armed marines and bluejackets who pulled lustily for the crippled schooner. So to save his vessel and her precious cargo from falling into the enemy's hands, friend Bowlegs hastily stripped her of what he could and scuttled her in four fathoms of water. Then, tossing what supplies and equipment they could gather, and some few thousands in currency, into the long boat, the pirates pulled for shore and took to the woods.

With the schooner at the bottom of the cove, and the piratical crew hidden in the bush, the British commander gave up and sailed away in search of other pirates. When at last the topsails of the warship dipped below the horizon, Billy and the twenty-seven survivors of his crew came forth from their hiding places, built a few shacks on the beach, and busied themselves at trying to save whatsoever they might from the sunken schooner. Without divers and equipment it was of course impossible to recover the treasure, and even were such available a deal of time would be required. So Bowlegs planned to erect a fairly good camp, leave his trusted men in charge, and make his way to Louisiana. There he would sell his plantation, secure the needed equip-

ment, and, gathering together his family, return to the cove and make his headquarters there until he had salvaged his ill-gotten riches.

One might suppose that a man who had already salted down a comfortable fortune would have been content to write off the schooner and her cargo to profit and loss, and return to civilization for once and all. But Billy Bowlegs was not only avaricious but miserly, and it was not in his nature to leave a million or more lying in shoal water without trying to get it. So leaving the camp in the care of his chief officer, a Spaniard named Pedro Bogue, the pirate chieftain, accompanied by two men, started on his journey. In due course of time his plans were successfully carried out and in a trim little sloop he and his family set sail for the scene of disaster. But only four men of the twenty-five were there to welcome him. Only Pedro, two fellow Spaniards and Jim Kelly, the bo's'n, remained alive. Of the other twenty-one, some had died of fever, some had been killed by hostile Indians, and some had deserted and had vanished in the jungle.

Thus short-handed, all Bowlegs' efforts to recover his treasure failed, and when his wife died of fever he abandoned further efforts, moved across the bay, built a substantial log cabin and dwelt there, within sight of the spot where his ship was sunk, until 1865. By that time Rogers himself was the sole survivor of the pirate crew. Pedro and his countrymen had died years before, and Kelly, who had married, settled down, raised a family and had become a respectable citizen, had also passed on to another sphere.

By this time, too, Billy's family had grown up and the old man, who was now over seventy, was becoming crotchety. Naturally his sons felt that to dwell like hermits, with no comforts, in a wilderness, when they possessed a fortune, was an intolerable situation; but their father flew into a furious temper whenever they suggested making good use of his hidden hoards. As a result they decided to help themselves to what they wanted. Unfortunately, however, Billy got wind of their plans, and, cursing them with all the fervency and fluency of a pirate captain, he drove the family away and swore a great oath never to see or speak to them again as long as he lived—a vow which he never broke. But there was a nephew who was a great favorite of the old pirate. To him Rogers promised to leave a goodly treasure when he passed away, and to insure the young man's getting it the old pirate actually showed his nephew where he had cached one hoard. Moreover, after Billy Bowlegs' death, the favored nephew secured the gold and lived comfortably for the rest of his life on his piratical uncle's bequest.

Aside from the lucky nephew, Billy Bowlegs had another and even more intimate friend, a man whom he had met while killing cattle in 1878, and with whom he lived for the last twelve years of his misspent life. Although dour, sullen, and secretive, yet Rogers took this man into his complete confidence, told him of his pirate days and blood-stained past, and discussed plans for salvaging the schooner and digging up the treasures he had hidden. Death, however, interrupted the old pirate's schemes, and his friend, without means or the ability to



carry out his chum's plans, never attempted to recover any of the buried or sunken riches.

Moreover, this man is, or was until recently, still alive, for it must be borne in mind that all this happened not so very long ago. Even Billy Bowlegs was living until 1888, when he died at the ripe old age of ninety-three, so that the story of this last of the Gulf pirates and his caches of precious metals and gems, and his scuttled schooner, is not ancient history embroidered by tradition, but is well within the memory of many living men.

Why the old pirate never made use of his fortune is something of a puzzle. But after all is it so strange or inexplicable? He had no real use for riches; he was a rough, tough old scoundrel, and he was perfectly content to dwell in semi-savage style on the edge of the wilderness. Moreover, he probably realized that the sudden possession of wealth would arouse curiosity, that questions would be asked and the law might take an interest, with the result that he might swing at the end of a rope after all. Whatever the reason, he never recovered the bulk of his treasure. From time to time he would visit the spots where he had hidden his riches, satisfy himself that they had not been disturbed and that the landmarks were still in evidence, and would return to his shack apparently content.

Undoubtedly, with the passing of the years, the gradual changes wrought by wind and weather on the sandy shores of Florida were noted by old Rogers who, familiar with the spots and the precise locations of his caches, was not misled by drifting sands or growing brush and

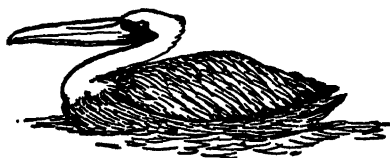
palmettos. As he had no intention of disinterring the gold he probably chuckled to himself as he noticed the sand piling deeper and deeper over the buried chests and bags and casks, thus protecting them the more from chance treasure-seekers.

And most securely did the sands of time protect Billy Bowlegs millions. When, a year or two ago, the stoop-shouldered, white-bearded old fellow who, alone of all the world, knew the hiding places of the treasures, led an expedition to the spot, he stared about as if in a dream. Though the landmarks and bearings were still there, the entire surface of the land had been so altered as to be unrecognizable. And when, following his directions, the treasure-hunters located the spot where he declared the treasure had been buried, they found that nearly fifty feet of sand had accumulated above it! Only by means of a steam shovel or a dredge would it be possible to remove the thousands of tons of sand, and neither was available. So Billy Bowlegs' cached treasures still lie under Florida's sands, and his schooner, with a million dollars' worth of gold ore, still rests on the bottom of the bay where she was sunk less than a century ago.

Some day, perhaps even before this book is published, a storm may tear away the sand and reveal the old pirate's millions to some lucky beach comber. Some day, by merest chance or accident, some fisherman or winter visitor may discover the rotting hulk of the pirate's ship with her cargo of gold ore intact.

But the chances are that neither buried chests of gold and silver and precious gems nor the schooner with its

million dollar cargo will ever be found; for somehow a jinx or the pirates' curse seem ever to guard their piratical hoards, and rare indeed are the instances of such treasures being recovered by honest men.



## CHAPTER IX

### FLORIDA'S MOST REMARKABLE HIGHWAY

The Tamiami Trail. A gigantic undertaking. The building of the Trail. Perils and hardships. Conquering the Everglades. The completion of a vision. The road through the heart of the Everglades. A vast bird sanctuary. Wild life along the Trail. Fauna and flora of the Everglades. Birds along the way. The crime of the plume hunters. Indian camps. Onward to Miami.

THE Tamiami Trail which leads diagonally across Florida for nearly three hundred miles between Tampa and Miami, is not only the most remarkable highway in the state but is one of the most remarkable motor roads in the world. Yet few of the thousands who dash along this perfectly surfaced boulevard are aware of this fact. And fewer still realize the romance, the high adventure of its making, the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that faced the dauntless men who built it, the terrific undertaking that it was to construct a motor highway across hundreds of miles of almost impenetrable morasses, almost bottomless swamps, and through the very heart of the vast Everglades.

Its story is an epic—the saga of one of the greatest engineering feats of the past century, of indomitable courage and perseverance, years of toil and hardships, suffering and death—but a story known to comparatively few.

The story of the Tamiami Trail really began when Mr. William S. Hill came to Miami thirty years ago, for the highway was his dream, and it might be most appropriately called the William Hill Trail.

As one motors swiftly and smoothly over the Trail today, with the Everglades stretching away on either hand, it is difficult to imagine conditions as they were thirty or forty years ago. At that time few white men had ever penetrated more than a few miles into the glades. And only one party of white men had ever actually crossed the vast wilderness.

That was in 1892, when an exploring party arrived at Miami from Fort Myers after enduring hardships, sufferings and terrors almost indescribable. More dead than alive, gaunt and hollow-eyed, racked with fever and with features rendered unrecognizable by the bites of insects, the men fell exhausted, as with the last remnants of their strength they struggled from the green hell they had passed through. Utterly helpless, they were carried into the settlement on stretchers.

Even twenty years ago when, in 1914, Mr. Hill first dreamed of a road across the Everglades, they were still unconquered, unexplored; a vast unknown, untrodden wilderness; and as recently as eight years ago, the only road was a rough, unsurfaced cartroad overgrown with sawgrass and weeds and extending barely forty miles from Coral Gables. Yet a little more than a year later the Tamiami Trail was an accomplished fact, and on March 27, 1927, hundreds of cars, forming a procession miles long, led by Mr. Hill, crossed from Tampa to Miami. And among those who took part in this official

opening of the highway were several members of the exploring party which, after incredible hardships, had won through the Everglades in 1892.

But the real story lies in the building of the Trail. From Tampa to Fort Myers there were no great difficulties, for there the highway merely skirts the Everglades. But between the town of Everglades and Miami were nearly one hundred and fifty miles of practically unknown, unexplored morass, the true Everglades, the haunt of the Seminoles, of alligators, and crocodiles, of deadly moccasins and giant diamond-back rattlesnakes; the breeding grounds of hordes of mosquitoes and other noxious biting insects; the home of cougars, bears and lynxes; a district where no bit of hammock land rises over twelve feet above sea level; where the only soil is muck and ooze and that covered by black stagnant water.

Not even the surveyors and the contractors at first realized the fearful difficulty of the task they had undertaken. It had been planned to dump tons of broken rock into the morass and thus form a roadbed. But as fast as the rock was dumped in, it either vanished in the mud, in wet weather, or disintegrated in dry weather when the muck dried and caught fire, permitting the rock fill to drop to the bedrock far below. There was but one solution to the problem—to remove everything down to the bedrock of limestone and on this as a foundation construct a solid stone causeway.

To do this was a Herculean task. Every inch of the way had to be blasted, and such vast quantities of dynamite were used that while the Trail was in process

of building, Florida occupied the third place among the states of the Union in her consumption of the explosive. So much dynamite was employed that had the sticks been placed end to end they would have stretched from Miami to California and back across the continent, and in one county alone nearly three million sticks were exploded. But before the blasting could be done a way had to be cleared, and, armed with machetes and axes, and with riflemen to protect them from moccasins, rattlers, alligators and wild beasts, the little army of choppers would attack the tangle of vines, brush, sawgrass and palmetto scrub. Sweating and swearing, up to their armpits in water, beset by mosquitoes, cut and torn by thorns and razor edged sawgrass, at any instant in danger of feeling the fangs of a venomous serpent strike into their flesh, the men hacked and cut, penetrating foot by foot into the untamed Everglades and leaving a swath for the others to follow. Over this came a gang laying logs and tree trunks on the quaking mud, constructing a crude corduroy road strong enough and solid enough to permit the passage of the drilling machines.

Following these, moving ponderously, slowly, slipping and straining, floundering in the mud and water, with foam dripping from nostrils and with eyes rolling with their efforts, came the oxen dragging the heavy loads of cases and cases of dynamite. And when the holes had been drilled, the charges fired and the bedrock shattered, the ponderous dredges moved slowly forward like great prehistoric monsters, filling their hungry steel maws with the muck and broken stone, dumping it to

one side, and cutting a wide canal through the heart of the Everglades.

The men worked like demons. Dredges were mired, capsized and sunk. Men were blown to bits by premature explosions, bitten by deadly snakes, drowned, crushed and maimed. They worked in mud and water, ate in mud and water, slept in mud and water; but still they went on, slowly, steadily, inexorably conquering the Everglades. Sometimes a mile would be gained in a month; two miles in a month was fast work, and very rarely did they make three miles of headway.

Close on their heels came the construction gangs, filling and grading, crushing the rock that had been blasted from under the mud and slime; building the roadbed, the causeway that was the ultimate object of all that had gone before. But compared to the others, the real pioneers of the great project, their work was easy and simple. Always behind them was the ribbon of highway stretching back to civilization. They were on dry land, they were safe from the manifold perils that beset the others at every turn, and their work went on apace. Foot by foot, yard by yard, mile by mile, the Tamiami Trail bored through the vast Everglades, until at last the final mile was completed; the narrow white thread of the highway stretched through the vast morass, and the impossible had been accomplished.

Yet the Everglades had not been conquered. Like the jungles of the tropics, the mighty forests of the Amazon, the wild fastnesses of the Andes and the burning deserts of the East, they are unconquerable. Man may hurl himself upon them, may hew a way through them, may



wrest a bit of land from them; but he can never really conquer them. Even the Indians, children of the Everglades, know this; and, knowing it, they bow to the inevitable and submit to being conquered by the Everglades even though never conquered by the white man.

The marvel of the Tamiami Trail itself is scarcely greater than the marvels of plant and animal life that surround it. Tearing across from Tampa to Miami or vice versa at sixty miles an hour, the motor speed-fiend sees little aside from the straight level road stretching endlessly ahead between apparently limitless expanses of grassy swamps and cypress hammocks. Perhaps, now and again, a flock of blue and white herons, flapping upward from some drainage ditch, attracts passing attention; or the lazy turkey buzzards, rising from a dead opossum or crushed turtle in the roadway, force the motorist to slow down lest one of the big black birds should crash against the windshield. But aside from such glimpses of life, the motorists who hurl their modern juggernauts along the Tamiami Trail see little of the interesting life and the almost equally interesting vegetation of the Everglades.

To be sure, the scenery is tiresome and monotonous, yet to one interested in Nature and Nature's ways it holds a certain fascination; and, like a desert, it reveals an infinite variety of colors, details, moods and characters if one searches with an understanding eye and mind—the gray-green cypresses draped with their veils of Spanish moss, the palmettoes and yuccas, the pine trees, as straight as ships' masts, stretching away in endless vistas, the vast areas of dull, brownish-green saw-

gras, the acres of deep malachite tules, the cane brakes, and the gleaming golden miles of wild sunflowers. There are a myriad smaller, less conspicuous forms of verdure—purple convolvulus rioting over brush and trees, white, yellow and pink pond lilies, waxen-white lotus and lavender water hyacinth blooms covering the ditches and pools with a pastel-hued blanket, air plants clinging to the pathetic dead trees, with here and there a gorgeous orchid.

And by dawdling along or stopping for a space, one will find that an amazing variety of bird life is within sight. Everywhere are the little blue herons and their white fellows; dainty Louisiana herons are almost equally abundant. In many places scores of magnificent great white egrets stalk about in the short grass within a few rods of the highway, with here and there groups of the dainty snowy egrets. Huge, grayish-blue Wurde-man's herons, diminutive green herons, and an occasional bittern stand poised, as motionless as statues, among the reeds beside sloughs and pools. At the edges of the ditches or perched on the low branches of moss-draped cypresses, are flocks of white ibis with coral-colored legs and beaks. Families of grebes swim and dive among the lily pads, and there is scarcely a stretch of water where one does not see Florida and purple gallinules, while with wings wide spread the long-necked snake-birds or darters sun themselves on dead trees and stubs, their plumage gleaming like dull bronze in the brilliant light. From vantage points of telegraph poles sparrow hawks dart after passing insects or swoop upon venturesome finches and warblers. Ospreys sail in

wide circles overhead, and with rattling cries the kingfishers plunge downward with unerring aim to seize unwary fish and frogs.

But to really see the life of this great bird sanctuary of the government, one must wander about afoot, moving quietly along the roadside, sitting motionless beside the canal or the wayside pools, or, still better, strolling across the glades via one of the raised banks of some drainage ditch, for even with the complete protection from hunters and molestation afforded them, the shyer birds seldom venture within sight of passing motorists. One does not have to wander far from the highway to find a dozen or more interesting species. The caracaras, strange connecting links between the hawks and buzzards, the everglade and swallow-tailed kites, red shouldered hawks, half a dozen species of finches and buntings, numerous warblers and flycatchers, boat-tailed and bronzed grackles, cardinals and mockingbirds—these are but a few of the bird denizens of the district. On the higher, mound-like hammocks dwell the quaint burrowing owls. In the cypress swamps and pine forests bald eagles have their homes. Still deeper in the glades one may find the lovely roseate spoonbills, and if you stop off at one of several Indian villages beside the road and hire a Seminole to take you on a canoe trip through the labyrinth of waterways, a wonderland of Everglades wild life will be your rich reward.

Many species have vanished forever from the Everglades, others have become so extremely rare that even the Indians rarely see them; but the wonder is that any of the larger, more showy species remain, and only the

timely establishment of bird sanctuaries saved the majority of Everglades birds, and especially the so-called "plume" birds, from becoming as extinct as the dodo or the great auk.

For years the glades were the chief source of egret plumes or "ospreys." White men and Indians alike hunted the egrets, the herons and the spoonbills with untiring, unceasing persistency. The vanity of women demanded the birds' lovely plumes, they brought high prices, and as long as there were vast colonies of the birds it was easy work to slaughter them. No one can say, no one will ever know how many thousands or tens of thousands of the birds were ruthlessly destroyed for the sake of the few plumes each afforded. And as the plumes appeared upon the birds only during the mating and nesting season, untold thousands of helpless young nestlings were left to die a lingering death of starvation when their parents were shot down and stripped of their nuptial feathers. The fact that any of the egrets survived, that enough remained to propagate their species when at last the crime of the plume hunters was ended, affords striking proof of the vast numbers of these lovely creatures inhabiting the Florida Everglades. To be sure, some species never have recovered from the years of slaughter which they suffered. The little snowy egret is still comparatively scarce in most localities; the flamingoes have vanished except for a few in the most isolated areas near Cape Sable; the spoonbills are rare, and the Carolina parrot is still practically extinct, while the magnificent ivory-billed woodpecker is slowly increasing in numbers and the big American egret or

great white egret is abundant in many places and in certain localities is as numerous as the little blue heron or the Louisiana heron.

The Indian camps beside the trail are in themselves interesting, albeit the Florida redman has followed the lead of his white neighbors in garnering a livelihood from passing tourists, and has developed an almost Hebraic shrewdness and business acumen in exploiting his home life, his arts and crafts and in selling Indian curios and souvenirs. As is ever the case when the aborigine acquires a portion of the white man's civilization, these children of the Everglades are not over cleanly in persons or habits, and they do more of their traveling in battered Fords than in dugout canoes. However, their thatched huts and their brilliantly hued native costumes add a touch of local color and picturesqueness to the famous trail. And even if it is something of a disillusionment to find thatched Indian huts plastered with signboards, yet there is something rather fascinating in the very incongruity of advertisements for beer and soft drinks displayed beside crudely printed signs informing the passer-by that this is "Chestnut Billy's Camp" or "Tommy Wildcat's Village" or "Jim Tommy's" or other equally typical Seminole names.

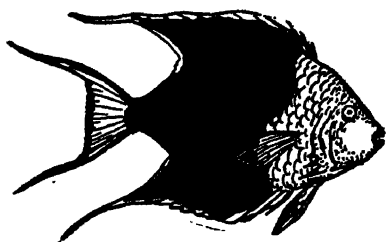
In these wayside Indian camps one may purchase Seminole dolls, live baby alligators, seed and shell necklaces, fans and other articles or, for ten or fifteen cents charged for admission, one may enter the village and watch the Indians' home life; the men lolling about and busily employed at doing nothing, the brown-skinned children frolicking and laughing like children

of any race anywhere, and the women, shy and aloof, clad in their long multicolored skirts and capes and with necks concealed beneath mounds of beads, busy preparing meals, cutting firewood, shredding fiber for weaving or occupied at other household or family tasks.

To many tourists these Indian camps beside the Tamiami Trail, the reservation at Fort Lauderdale and the Mussa Isle village near Miami afford the only glimpses of the Seminoles and Seminole life; but they should not be taken as typical of the Indians who, for so many years, defied the mighty power of the United States and came off the victors in the end. To really see the Seminoles at home one must journey far into the Everglades to the Big Cypress swamps, and that is a journey which few visitors to Florida are able or care to take.

For that matter I do not suppose that one motorist or tourist out of every hundred or more who follow the Tamiami Trail gives a whoop for vegetation, bird life or Indians. By far the greater majority are going from somewhere to somewhere, and are only interested in getting there as swiftly as possible. To them the remarkable trail is merely a road, a level, almost straight, and smooth-surfaced highway minus traffic lights and speed limits, leading from one electrically lighted, modern city to another, with the frivolity, the jazz, the bright lights and cabarets, the syncopated madness and excitement of Miami in the distance. To such persons the marvel of the roadway, the wonder that it ever was brought into existence, the romance of its story mean nothing, even if they know of it. To them the Ever-

glades—the strangest, most unique, most mysterious of natural land formations on the continent—are merely dreary wastes of water, grass and trees. To them a bird is simply a bird, and the entire avifauna of the world is divided into two great classes—game birds and others. To such—and their name is legion, Miami with its noise and skyscrapers, its crowded beaches, its close packed miles of motor cars, its raucous music, its multitudinous beer gardens, bars and night clubs, its dazzling neon light signs, its garish movie theaters, its over-decorated, over-luxurious hotels, holds far more lure, far more interest, far more attractions than anything that Mother Nature has ever produced to provide beauty and peace and fascination for mankind. So, oblivious of all but reaching their destination, they roar over the wonderful Tamiami Trail, through Coral Gables and so into Miami, the so-called “Magic City,” the winter playground of tens of thousands, the great, glorified, semi-tropical Coney Island of Florida.



## CHAPTER X

### THE MAGIC CITY

Booms and the strangest of land booms. Miami, the metropolis of the south. Fortunes made overnight. Strange tales. The wonder city on a mud flat. Sights and scenes about Miami. A gigantic side show. The bubble bursts. Hurricanes. Boom cemeteries.

ALTHOUGH the land boom of 1923-27 was the greatest of Florida booms, it was by no means the first. In fact, land booms and speculation in Florida were almost coincident with its settlement, for as early as 1559 there was a flurry in real estate. This was when Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano was commissioned by the King of Spain to found towns and establish settlements. But the expedition met with reverses and the first of Florida land booms collapsed before it had really begun. Then, in 1818 there was another boom in West Florida when no less a personage than Andrew Jackson was openly accused of being a "boomer" and of profiting greatly thereby. However, it proved to be a case of mistaken identity, the "Jackson" who was a speculator being no relation of the General. But the first really big land boom in Florida came in 1829 with the establishment of the city of St. Joseph. Almost overnight it became a busy thriving city of nearly 5000 inhabitants. Docks and terminals were built. A tremendous trade was developed and fortunes were made. For a time it was re-



puted to be the richest and wickedest city in the United States; but eleven years after it came into existence yellow fever killed over seventy-five percent of its inhabitants, and by 1850 it was an abandoned, forsaken town, although it is again on the road to prosperity. Again, with the advent of the East Coast Railway there was a mild boom. But nothing in the history of Florida, or of the world, ever equaled the great boom of 1923. Moreover, it was the world's strangest and most inexplicable boom. As a rule booms have some tangible, logical reason for booming. Someone discovers a deposit of gold, silver or other valuable metal or mineral, and immediately people rush to the new El Dorado, houses and buildings spring up overnight, a town or towns rise as if by magic and a boom is on. If the veins or lodes prove large and valuable the boom towns may become permanent and grow and prosper. But if the deposits are small or soon worked out, the settlements are soon abandoned and another deserted "boom town" is added to the list of many that are scattered over the surface of our western states and elsewhere. At times, too, there are tremendous land booms when some desirable area of land is opened to settlement, as in the case of the famous Cherokee Strip.

All such booms are explicable, for they are the direct result of some new discovery or some new opportunity to make money; but the great Florida boom had no such basis. Florida was not a new country in 1923. Its climate, its agricultural possibilities, its resources and opportunities were well known. There was nothing new to induce thousands to make a mad stampede to

Florida. Yet the boom once started increased like a snowball and grew to incredibly stupendous proportions. Land rose to unheard-of, fabulous, utterly preposterous value. Millions were made and lost overnight. The whole country went Florida mad, and new cities, and new towns came into existence.

Chief of these was Miami, the mushroom boom city that rose as if by magic to become a veritable metropolis, with skyscrapers and vast hotels, with palatial residences and great docks, but without a really logical reason for its existence. And even when, like the proverbial rocket, the boom came down like a stick, and the bubble burst, Miami remained and prospered and grew, and continues to prosper and grow—which is by all precedents and reason quite contrary to the rules of the game of booms.

Probably no one really knows why or how the great boom started. No one person can tell the whole story of the boom, and never, in all probability, will the whole story of the boom be told. But it held romance and drama, tragedy and adventure, strange, almost incredible, episodes, and much of its history reads like the wildest fiction.

Although the boom is generally credited with commencing in 1923, yet it had been gradually germinating for a considerable period before that date, with land values steadily increasing. But in 1923 the boom suddenly burst all bounds and erupted like a financial volcano. And while all Florida felt it—and later suffered for it—the east coast was the most directly concerned, and the nucleus of the entire hectic, insane era of specu-

lation was Miami.

Originally an outpost of the army, and known as Fort Dallas, the little settlement on the shore of Biscayne Bay had grown rapidly after the advent of the railway. Its population in 1896 had been but sixty inhabitants and by 1920 it had increased to thirty thousand, an almost unprecedented growth, but nothing to what was destined to come. During the next four years its population had doubled, and during the boom it quadrupled its population, which, at the present time, is over two hundred thousand. No wonder Miami is known as "The Magic City"! Yet its only advantages, its only attractions, its only reasons for existence are its beautiful site, its mild and healthful climate and the almost sublime optimism of its citizens. To them, Miami was the Utopia of the semi-tropics, a Paradise on earth, a future metropolis, a center of world trade and commerce; and they hypnotized themselves—and thousands of others as well—into the belief that Miami could be made into a huge manufacturing town, a seaport rivaling New York, and the world's most popular and famous winter resort.

Unquestionably many of these men were really serious in spreading such highly colored and unreasonable propaganda, for the one greatest outstanding characteristic of the Miamian is his civic pride. But equally unquestionable is the fact that much of the propaganda was spread broadcast solely to lure investors and speculators and to launch the greatest and most spectacular of land booms on the public, and to make fortunes for the promoters. The scheme worked to an extent beyond their wildest dreams. Capitalists and investors, home



*Photo by G. H. Rorer*

MIAMI FROM THE AIR



seekers and business men, widows and orphans, bankers and brokers, men and women of every class and station vied with one another in their mad rush to buy Florida lands, and especially land in and about Miami.

The boom was on. Every acre of solid land for miles in every direction was staked out, divided into town sites, farms, and building lots. Properties, which a year previously had been valued at two or three thousand dollars, were eagerly snapped up as "bargains" for hundreds of thousands of dollars. One man at Palm Beach who, unable to collect a few months' wages, had taken a strip of barren sand dune in lieu of money, was offered one million dollars in cash for his "property" and refused it. Street frontages, which a few months earlier could have been purchased for five dollars a foot or less, were bought for five thousand dollars a foot.

In order to accommodate vessels arriving crowded to capacity with investors, property holders and speculators, with building material and supplies, giant dredges were put to work in Miami's harbor and the mud scooped up from the bottom of the sea was staked out before it was dry, divided into building lots and sold for twenty-five thousand dollars per lot. As the boom increased, speculators and purchasers could not wait until the great dredge buckets dumped their loads, but actually bought and paid for property months before it had been lifted from the bottom of the bay. Rubbish and ash dumps changed hands for millions. Artificial islands created overnight were disposed of for fabulous fortunes.

Business blocks, even hotels, were vacated and transformed into countless real estate offices fitted and

furnished like palaces. Dry goods and department stores were torn apart and rebuilt with marble and onyx. Silk and velvet hangings, Chinese rugs, stained glass windows, tiles from ancient monasteries and cathedrals in South America and Europe, tessellated pavements from Florentine and Oriental palaces, carved wainscoting and doorways were brought at incalculable expense to furnish the hotels, the realty palaces and the private homes in the city which was growing like a gigantic mushroom. Skyscrapers were rising with the speed of Aladdin's magical palace. Vast hotels were crowded to overflowing before they were half completed. Every railway leading toward Florida was choked with endless strings of freight cars.

In the port were fleets of ships, of every size, rig and flag, laden with lumber, structural iron work and supplies. At one time over sixty ships were discharging cargoes at once. There were not enough vessels available to transport the materials which Miami was demanding. Ancient craft, unfit for sea, condemned, that for years had been hauled on mud flats and abandoned, were hastily repaired, rerigged, loaded with lumber and sent to Florida. One ship owner friend of mine bought four dismantled old schooners, rerigged them, loaded them to capacity with lumber, the freight on which amounted to over twenty times the cost of vessels and expenses of voyage, and gave the skippers orders to sink, burn or beach the old hookers as soon as the cargoes were discharged.

So crowded with shipping was Miami's harbor that many vessels were compelled to put into Key West, and

their cargoes were sent overland by rail. Free busses, that cost ten thousand dollars each, were making express trips between Miami and Jacksonville, Savannah, even to New York, and were bringing capacity crowds of speculators and home seekers, investors and fortune hunters to the Florida boom towns.

Everywhere along the highways, and for twenty to thirty miles across the Everglades, were rows and rows of white stakes marking village, farm and home sites worth—so their promoters claimed—more than the same areas in the richest gold placers even known.

Everywhere were ornate gateways inscribed with alluring names of villages or colonies, with concrete drives and streets, electrified, watered, but without a solitary house, yet with every square foot of the invisible town bought and paid for. Everywhere, too, armies of carpenters, masons and landscape gardeners were working like beavers, constructing hotels, business blocks, homes and apartment houses, and laying out streets and gardens which were snapped up as fast as and faster than they were offered for sale.

Men and women who a few months earlier had been on the verge of abject poverty, had bank deposits running into six or eight figures and were scornfully turning down offers of hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars, for their swampy, half-flooded homesteads or worthless strips of sand dunes.

The recorders' offices could not begin to register the deeds and transfers. Hundreds of extra clerks were employed; they worked day and night, yet it required months to have a deed registered. Dishonest, unprin-



ciplined gamblers and grafters, confidence men and crooks flocked to this real estate El Dorado and mulcted unsuspecting persons of fortunes. Land which never existed was sold at fabulous prices to men and women in the North who had never seen Florida, but had been infected with the fever of Florida's boom. Land at the bottom of the sea was disposed of in the same way and, as one authority declared, had the boom not collapsed when it did the entire Atlantic Ocean for three miles from land would have been sold to gullible buyers in the North and West.

From New Jersey, New York, New England and the Middle West these tricksters imported the finest fruits and vegetables, displayed them in windows, together with photographs of Maryland farms, advertised them as products of the Everglades, and sold tens of thousands of acres of undrained, utterly hopeless muck on the strength of their misrepresentations.

Land companies wired to New York, Boston and Philadelphia for entire orchestras, bands and theatrical companies to come post haste, regardless of expense, to Florida. Airplanes were chartered to advertise by sky writing and to rush famous singers, musicians and architects to Florida. Bootleggers, professional gamblers, pickpockets, crooks of every kind reaped a harvest with the police too busy striving to make order out of chaos to bother over petty criminals. And the jurymen, judges and officers of law and justice were far too busy making millions on paper to hold court or look after legal affairs.

Roughnecks and uncouth farmers, bull-necked ex-

pugilists, ward heelers and gangsters, flashy "sports" and race track touts strutted about, dwelling in luxurious hotel suites, ablaze with diamonds, throwing hundred or even thousand dollar bills about like water, and hailed, publicized, written up in the press as Napoleons of finance, wizards of the real estate world.

The ignorance and illiteracy of some of the most famed and greatest of the operators were absolutely incredible. One story is told of a multi-millionaire speculator who announced that he was going to have a one hundred percent American town; that no lots would be sold to Negroes, Jews or Roman Catholics; that the streets were to be named after the states, and the avenues after the presidents. And, he added, he was going to celebrate the opening up of his tract by a one hundred percent American dinner with a one hundred percent American band playing one hundred percent American music. One of his hearers inquired where he expected to secure the one hundred percent American band.

"I've arranged to hire the United States Marine Band," he snorted. The other grinned.

"The United States Marine Band happens to be eighty-five percent foreign," he observed.

"Hell!" exclaimed the promoter. "How in blazes can it be eighty-five percent foreigners when there are only sixty men in the band?"

Yet this man was the mayor of a town, the owner of a weekly paper, the president of the Chamber of Commerce and of a local bank. And there were thousands like him. Considering this, considering the false premises and over-optimistic statements on which the boom

was built, considering the gullibility of the public and the fact that transactions involving millions were wholly on paper, is it any wonder that the bubble collapsed like a pricked balloon?

The first premonitions of the end came in the autumn of 1925. The mad rush to buy lots began to subside. Property owners found there were no takers even when they reduced the prices they had been demanding. Rumors of foreclosures, of lawsuits, of the failures of business and realtors were heard on every side; and by the first of the year 1926 there was a decided drop in all values, in all transactions, and people and banks, loaded with notes, checks or papers, hurriedly tried to secure cash for their holdings.

With the real estate market dropping rapidly, the professionals, the gamblers and those who had wisely salted down their winnings fled north or west or merely settled down to enjoy life.

And then came the crash! Banks everywhere began to fail. There were runs on other banks. People who had imagined themselves millionaires found themselves paupers, rich in worthless paper and worthless land, but unable to realize a dollar in solid cash. By 1927 the boom was dead and financial panic had taken its place. Everywhere were deserted, half-finished houses and buildings, everywhere were the staked-out lots, tenantless and forsaken. Grass and weeds were beginning to hide the concrete roads, the flagged sidewalks and the gardens of suburban villages which never had gone beyond the paper stage. And everywhere were closed banks, unoccupied offices, empty hotels and boarded-up

shops and stores.

But despite the terrific personal losses (it has been estimated that over ninety percent of those who took part in the boom were losers) the hectic period had brought some truly substantial results and had actually benefited Florida. Splendid concrete highways had been built; roads had been constructed far into the interior and the Everglades. Vast areas of the swamps had been drained and transformed to arable land; canals had been dug and creeks and streams bridged; and many a town and city had grown and prospered and had been firmly established on a sound, safe and sane basis. But the most amazing, the most tangible result was Miami, the Magic City, the Metropolis of the South. From a small town, scarcely more than a village, it had grown in the short space of three years into a huge busy city, a city which, in a way, to be sure, is something of a gigantic side show or elaborated Coney Island, but a great business center, an important port and the best-known and most popular winter resort in America. Few cities anywhere can boast of better streets, finer buildings, more beautiful suburbs or a more delightful setting. Even if the optimistic dreams of its city fathers may never come true, even if Miami is never to be the great distributing port between North and South America, and even if it can never become an important industrial or manufacturing town, still it has its own place in the sun—an important place, as the winter playground, the jazz and whoopee center of tens of thousands of visitors who find in its garish hotels, its noisy cabarets, its beaches and its jazzy atmosphere the life and entertainment they crave.

Just as Palm Beach is the recognized winter playground for the blue-blooded and Blue Book millionaire members of society, and those famous in arts and letters, so Miami is the recognized Mecca for *hoi-polloi*, the newly rich, the impecunious and the hilarious, night-life-loving members of our commonwealth.

And even if Miami's restricted harbor and its docks are destined never to be crowded with great liners and immense cargo ships bound to and from the world's great ports and carrying the world's cargoes in their holds, there will ever be the pleasure cruise ships crowded to capacity with noisy, uproarious, irresponsible tourists impatient to spend their money in the pleasure palaces of the Magic City on a mud flat; and, after all, their money is just as good as that of the leaders of New York's "Four Hundred."

That Miami can never become all that its boosters wish and claim is patent to anyone familiar with commerce, industry and world trade. Neither can it ever develop into a manufacturing center. Its harbor is shallow and restricted; the ship channel leading to it is long, narrow and must be constantly dredged in order to maintain its depth, and there is no logical reason for vessels plying between North and South America transshipping cargoes at Miami. Water affords the cheapest means of transportation for freight, and once a cargo is aboard ship the difference of a few days on a long run is immaterial. And with no raw products, no natural source of power, and far from the centers of distribution, Miami could not possibly compete with more favorably situated towns in manufacturing.

But in one respect it is far ahead of any other city. It is the most ideal airport in the United States and its magnificent landing field and port afford facilities impossible to duplicate elsewhere. Here planes plying between South America, the West Indies, Washington, New York and elsewhere come swooping down from the skies. With mail and passengers from the far distant cities of the southern continent, from Lima and Valparaiso, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, Rio and Caracas, Demerara and Trinidad, Santo Domingo and the Virgin Islands, Cuba and the Bahamas, they all make a stop at Miami. It is America's most important and busiest airport, and to my mind the most interesting and worthwhile sight in the Magic City is this airport with its giant planes, its mammoth "Brazilian Clippers" and "Yankee Clippers," its cosmopolitan throngs and its efficient, orderly bustle and hurry.

But as an airport, a city, a center of business or otherwise, Miami has one great disadvantage. It is all too subject to disastrous hurricanes. Even though the Miamians discount the danger of hurricanes, and optimistically declare each one will be the last, and even go so far as to avoid mentioning the name by referring to the hurricanes as "blows," yet the fact remains that Miami lies directly in the track of many of these West Indian storms; and hurricanes, unlike lightning, have an unpleasant habit of striking many times in the same place. This has been borne out on Florida's east coast which has been swept time and time again by these devastating cyclonic storms.

In 1565 Ribault's fleet was totally destroyed by a

hurricane, as described in Chapter II, and from that date on the history of Florida is plentifully punctuated by tales of hurricanes. While some of these struck the coast north of Miami by far the greater number and the most destructive and severe storms came roaring in from the sea at or near the present site of Miami, although with the district sparsely inhabited, and with no large towns to be blown to bits, the property damage and losses of life were negligible. But in 1715 the Spanish treasure fleet of fourteen galleons went down near Key Largo during a hurricane. In August, 1870, the steamship *Ladona* was blown ashore in a hurricane which swept the coast from the Keys to Cape Canaveral and, although her engines were running at full speed, and all anchors were out, she was driven, stern first, far up the beach. Eight years later, in 1878, a hurricane caused great damage along the coast, while the torrential rains accompanying it flooded vast areas of the country and formed great lakes which remained as such for over a year. In 1881 the ship *Vera Cruz* was smashed to bits by a hurricane, and wreckage was strewn upon the beaches from Cape Canaveral to below Miami.

For the next twelve years no serious hurricane vented its fury on Florida's coast, but in 1893 and again in 1894 two hurricanes in each year followed in rapid succession. During the first of the two 1894 storms over one-half of the Indian River was actually blown out by the terrific gale, leaving the sandy bottom dry and exposed where there was normally ten feet of water; and the nearby residents, driving wagons onto the sea bottom, gathered up loads of fish and lost anchors and quantities of cables,

boat gear and other wreckage.

But the most destructive hurricane recorded and the most famous was that of Sept. 17-18, 1926, which almost wiped Miami from the map. By midnight of that fateful day the wind was blowing at the rate of 132 miles an hour, at which time the wind gauge was torn away so that no one can say how great a velocity the wind actually attained. But even 132 miles an hour is almost beyond conception to a person who never has been through a hurricane. Trees are lifted bodily from the earth and are hurled about like straws. Water is driven with such incredible force that it will make dents in solid wood. Leaves and twigs are hurled with the force of bullets and bury themselves in boards and planks. Sheets of corrugated iron go scaling through the air, and, like giant knives, slice through the trunks of palm trees and decapitate human beings. The sea, driven in a roaring wall of water, sweeps over the land. Motor cars and even railway trains are lifted, overturned, carried sometimes for hundreds of feet. The sides of solid concrete buildings are literally pushed in by the terrific pressure of the wind. Roofs are carried away, concrete and stone facings are torn from the steel frames of buildings, and the iron work is twisted and bent into tangled masses of girders. The suction created by the stupendous rush of wind through the streets does almost as much damage as the wind itself, and doors and windows are sucked from their frames.

All this and more took place during the devastating 1926 hurricane at Miami. Scarcely an electric light pole was left standing, trees crashed through houses reducing



them to kindling wood and piles of broken brick and stone. Stone walls were razed to the ground.

For nine terrible hours of the night the screeching maniacal wind continued to wreak havoc and destruction. Then, at 7 A. M. on the eighteenth, the wind suddenly dropped, the center of the cyclone passed over the city, and for half an hour there was a dead calm during which the rarefied air caused many persons to faint, while the incredible dryness caused postage stamps to curl up as if in an oven, and wall paper cracked and peeled in great flakes from walls.

Then, once again, the hurricane burst in all its fury, a fury that seemed redoubled, and for eight hours it blew harder than ever. Everything that had escaped the first onslaught was shattered and wholly or partially destroyed. Huge steam dredges and large vessels were driven high and dry upon the shores, and countless lives were lost by drowning. Although the property damage in Miami was appalling, the toll in human lives was small; but not so elsewhere. The storm swept up the coast from Key Largo to Pompano, then roared northwest to devastate Moore Haven on the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee, and there snuffed out over five hundred lives.

Scarcely had Miami and the stricken district begun to recover from this disaster when, on October nineteenth, another hurricane hurled itself upon the half-ruined city. But the wind failed to attain the terrific velocity of the first storm, although cloudbursts of rain caused enormous damage by flooding houses and buildings whose roofs had been destroyed by the previous hurri-

cane and had not been repaired. So overcome and terrified were the inhabitants that thousands deserted their homes and fled northward, and for days the highways were so blocked by cars bearing refugees from the stricken area that all southbound traffic was abandoned.

But those who remained worked nobly to succor the unfortunate, to shelter the homeless and feed the foodless. For an entire week the steps of the Roman Catholic Church were transformed into a free lunch counter. Bedding, clothing and other necessities were donated by those who could dispense with them, and were heaped in piles where the needy could help themselves. Hotels were thrown open to the homeless and were transformed into emergency hospitals, and everyone who owned an automobile or a taxi which had escaped the havoc plied his car night and day transporting the injured, carrying loads of food and supplies and bringing doctors and nurses from place to place.

Very rapidly Miami recovered from the disaster. Money poured into the city, the Red Cross was promptly on its job, and soon the Magic City had once more proved its right to the nickname. From the ruins wrought by the hurricane it rose fairer, bigger and better than ever. And coming as it did at the close of the great boom, when finances were in a critical state, the hurricane, despite its devastation, was, in a way, of real benefit to Miami. Millions of dollars were paid by insurance companies for losses sustained. Merchants, lumber dealers, dealers in builders' supplies, food stores and house furnishers found it impossible to maintain a stock equal to the demand, and an army of laborers,

carpenters, iron workers and artizans of all kinds was employed for months repairing and reconstructing the city.

No really destructive hurricane has swept down on Florida since that time. The hurricane of 1929, which burst upon Nassau and blew with unabated fury for five days, had about exhausted its forces by the time it reached Florida, and since then no storm worthy of the name of hurricane has struck the coast. But a summer never passes without its hurricane scare. At the first warnings that a tropical disturbance of intensity is approaching the coast, the inhabitants become panic-stricken and the streets resound to the blows of hammers and the rasping of saws as windows and doors are boarded up and everything movable is nailed and fastened down. The lumber merchants and the carpenters reap rich harvests at such times, for tens of thousands of feet of planks, joists and boards are used, only to be torn down and cast aside when the scare is over or the storm has passed.

Why, in Florida, the people have not realized what a waste of material and money is entailed by such methods, and have not followed the practice of the West Indians and provided their buildings with stout, permanent hurricane shutters is a mystery. Possibly it is because of their reluctance to admit that they dwell in a hurricane belt; for to equip their homes and shops with hurricane shutters would be to proclaim to all the world that hurricanes *are* an ever-present and very real menace to property and life in Florida. But it is a good deal like Don Quixote tilting at a windmill for the Floridians to

try to delude themselves into a false security by ignoring ordinary precautions and speaking of hurricanes as "blows."

The visitor to southern Florida may well wonder why there should be so many and such extensive cemeteries scattered about the countryside, enough, it would seem, to more than accommodate the entire population of the state were its inhabitants to be suddenly and totally destroyed at one fell swoop. Do the Floridians expect the next hurricane to wipe out thousands and so provide in advance for the reception of the dead? Do they expect some unforeseen disaster, some awful epidemic, which will tax the capacity of the cemeteries already partly filled? No, the superabundance of burial plots is the result of the great boom, for, incredible and amazing as it may seem, there was a tremendous boom in cemeteries following the boom in building lots.

As the demand for home and business sites declined, some unknown but brilliant genius in the real estate racket conceived the astoundingly original idea of selling cemetery lots. Marvelously attractive plans and alluring descriptions of beautiful cemeteries were distributed far and wide and the graveyards were so glowingly described that one felt it almost a pity not to die in order to rest amid such charming surroundings. Strangely enough, the public bit at the new scheme, and enough burial plots were sold to provide final resting places for all those who had purchased land in Florida, together with their families, relatives and descendants for years to come.

## CHAPTER XI

### MOTORING ACROSS THE SEA

Southward toward the keys. The tip end of the continent. Along the Florida Keys. Spanning a gap by ferry. Stopping places by the way. Fishing camps. Pirate haunts and homes of wreckers. An amazing journey. The Key of the Bones. A brief history of Key West. The New Deal.

SOUTHWARD from Miami the Dixie Highway beckons toward the tip of Florida and the Keys. It is a trip well worth taking, a trip unlike any other in the world, this trip of nearly two hundred miles to Key West, the most southerly city of North America, with over one hundred miles of the journey traversing the long chain of the Florida Keys and actually spanning the sea.

To be sure, much of the first part of the trip is far from interesting. But the way leads through lovely Coconut Grove and across level farm lands and past citrus fruit groves and wayside villages, so that the stretches of pine barrens and swamps, the monotony of wide expanses of sawgrass-covered coastal plains and sand dunes merely add variety to the scene through which the smooth concrete highway winds like a broad gray ribbon leading ever southward. Now and then one catches a glimpse of the Atlantic; mangrove and sea-grape trees become more and more numerous, salt marshes take the place of sandy plains, and for mile after mile the roadway is bordered on either side by wide canals. Then, swinging around a

curve, we rumble over a steel draw-bridge spanning an estuary of the sea, and, leaving the mainland behind, reach the first of the Keys.

Across the little islet the road leads between walls of dense semi-tropical jungle, crosses another bridge with the shimmering translucent sea on either hand, and plunges into a second jungle. Across key after key, over bridge after bridge, the highway stretches ahead to Key Largo. But aside from the glimpses of sea afforded where bridges span the channels and estuaries, one might as well be upon the mainland, for unfortunately, from a scenic standpoint, the roadway is shut in by the rank growth of brush and trees. It would add immeasurably to the attractiveness of the journey if the jungle were cut away to afford an unobstructed view of the ocean on one hand and the Gulf of Mexico on the other. But as it is, the only indications of the proximity of the sea are the numerous signboards pointing the way to fishing camps and boat landings which are totally invisible from the road, although but a few rods from the highway.

Probably no place in the world is more famous as a fishing ground than the Florida Keys, and everywhere, upon the numerous bridges, scores of men and women are seen industriously angling, and being richly rewarded, as proved by the piles of flapping, gasping fish beside them. The chief—in fact the sole—industry of many of the inhabitants of the keys is fishing, and, during the winter season, taking parties of northern visitors fishing. At Long Key, Matecumbe and elsewhere are quite elaborate fishing camps with comfortable hotels and dining places, with fleets of motor boats and corps

of expert guides and boatmen who will guarantee their patrons splendid sport with sailfish, tarpon, and other big game fish.

But if one is not an ardent angler these keys hold little to attract a visitor, and passing swiftly along Matecumbe the first section of the road ends at the ferry slip. Here the motorist must desert the land and take to the sea for a short voyage of two hours across the open water to Grassy Key. But plans are under way to eliminate this ferry trip, and a second ferry between Grassy Key and No Name Key; and a large force of workmen are already constructing the causeways to carry the road across these two unbridged stretches of sea and thus complete a through over-seas highway from Key West to Miami.

The ferry trip, however, is a rather pleasant break in the journey, for the water here in the lee of the keys is always smooth and stretches like an expanse of molten beryl, gleaming with opalescent tints, from horizon to horizon, with green-clad islets in the distance and the long causeway of the railway, like the articulated backbone of some titanic reptile, stretching southward until it dwindles and vanishes in the dim distance.

At the present time there are two ferries in each direction daily, leaving Lower Matecumbe southbound and No Name Key northbound at 9 A. M. and 2 P. M. But if one does not care to leave Miami at daybreak in order to catch the nine o'clock ferry, yet prefers to reach Key West before dark one may motor leisurely to Lower Matecumbe, remain overnight at the comfortable Matecumbe Hotel, where excellent meals are served, and take

the nine o'clock ferry the next morning. For that matter, the traveler who is fond of deep-sea fishing will find this a splendid spot to enjoy the sport.

At Grassy Key, the end of the two-hour ferry trip from Lower Matecumbe, we again take to the road and drive for thirteen miles across the little island to the second ferry whence another two-hour voyage over a smiling pale-green and turquoise sea brings us to No Name Key.

From this spot to Key West is by all odds the most interesting and pleasant portion of the entire trip. Across key after key with fascinatingly odd names—Torch, Ramrod, Summerland, Cudjoe, Sugar Loaf, Saddle Bunches, Pelican, Boca Chica—names redolent of old piratical and wrecking days; for mile after mile following the irregular shore line with the multicolored water and coral beaches beside the road, across miles-long bridges and causeways spanning the straits and channels, the lagoons and sounds, the highway follows the scimitar-curved chain of islets for forty-three miles. Past Pirate Cove and its fishing camp, beneath long rows of coconut palms, through jungles where tropical hard-wood trees rise above tangled thickets and rioting vines, the road leads on, until at last the skeleton towers of the Key West radio station loom against the cloudless sky. Crossing a final bridge, we see the most southerly of our cities before us, with the broad semicircular sweep of the Roosevelt Boulevard leading to right or left into the town.

For some unknown reason the Anglo-Saxon race appears to have a penchant for garbling foreign names



and rendering them unrecognizable. And just as the British colonists in Jamaica transformed Boca de Agua to Bog Walk, and the English in the Bahamas altered Isla de Tierra to Eleuthera, so their fellows called the Cayo Hueso, Key West. Its original Spanish name, Cayo de Huesos or Key of the Bones, was bestowed upon it by Ponce de Leon who, putting in for fresh water on his voyage along the keys, found the beach littered with human skeletons. No one knows whose bones were lying there bleaching in the sun, nor do we have any evidence to show whether they were the mortal remains of Indians or white men, for the old Dons were no ethnologists, and to them a skull was merely a skull.

It has been surmised by some that the skeletons were those of Indians who had fallen in some bloody inter-tribal battle, and one writer has even gone so far as to reconstruct the drama and describe how the aborigines of the keys were driven from islet to islet by the tribes of the mainland, until, reaching Key West, and unable to flee farther, they were slaughtered to the last man and woman, so that no one remained to inter or dispose of the bodies of their fellows. Unfortunately, however, we have yet to discover evidences that the Florida Keys were ever densely inhabited by the Indians, and Indian remains, skeletal or in the form of artifacts, mounds or village sites, are practically unknown on Key West. As in pre-Columbian days the aborigines rarely if ever warred without reason, save among cannibal tribes who, like the Caribs, made raids to replenish their larders and to add to their harems, it seems highly improbable to assume that the Florida Indians of the mainland should

have taken the trouble to invade the keys and exterminate their inhabitants, if any. Certainly there would have been no economic reason for so doing, for the mainland was far richer in game and other means of subsistence than were the islands, nor is it conceivable that—as the author of the hypothesis would have us believe—the few island Indians who may have visited the mainland would have so angered the inhabitants thereof as to bring on a war of extermination.

Personally I am of the opinion that the bones which the Spaniards found on the beach at Key West were those of Europeans, very probably Spaniards who had been shipwrecked on the island and, unable to sustain life, had perished miserably. For a number of years before Ponce de Leon set sail on his memorable voyage, Spanish ships had vanished in the Gulf of Mexico leaving no traces of their fate. Doubtless many of these had piled up on the treacherous reefs and shoals of the Florida Keys as, sailing from Panama, Central America and Mexico for Cuba, Hispaniola and Spain, their captains, wholly ignorant of the fact that the keys stretched southward to within one hundred miles of Havana, steered a course eastward until, even before the low-lying islands were sighted, they found their clumsy pot-bellied vessels crashing on to the jagged reefs.

For centuries later, in fact until the present day, ships have been piling up on the Florida Keys; and up to as recently as 1850, wrecking was the principal and most remunerative industry of the Key Westers. If modern ships, provided with accurate charts, and with masters

who were expert navigators, have been constantly wrecked on the reefs and keys in recent times, think what a menace the long chain of islets must have presented to the old caravels and galleons sailing uncharted seas, with only the crudest of devices for ascertaining latitude and longitude, and utterly incapable of making headway against the wind. So what is more probable than that one or several ill-fated vessels stove in their planking on Key West's reefs and left no traces other than the whitened skeletons of their crews lying upon the beach to greet Ponce de Leon and his fellow-voyagers?

Be that as it may, for many years after the searcher for the Fountain of Youth christened the island Cayo de Huesos, the only signs of human beings upon Key West were the skulls and bones upon the strip of beach. The spot held no attractions for the Dons; there were no aborigines to be captured and enslaved, no gold to be won from streams or mines, no valuable woods or spices, no big game to be hunted, not even good sweet water with which to fill a ship's empty casks.

But the very fact that it was a deserted, avoided speck of land attracted the deadliest enemies of the Spaniards—the buccaneers. To these daring, venturesome freebooters the Key of the Bones was an ideal spot for their purposes. It possessed a secure snug harbor, it was most conveniently close to Havana and the trade route of Spanish vessels plying between Hispaniola, Spain, Cuba and Mexico, and it was protected from possible attack by the outlying reefs. So at Key West many a famed buccaneer put in with his ships, and roistered on the

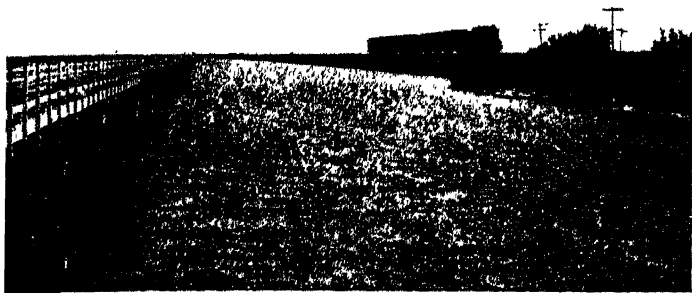
beach under the palms, or careened and cleaned his vessel or divided the loot from scuttled ships and sacked towns of the Spanish Main. Morgan and Montbars, Sharp and Sawkins, Ringrose and Dampier, L'Ollonois and Brazilero, DeLussan and Portugues, Wooden Leg and hoary old Mansvelt all knew Key West well, and foregathered upon its shores many a time. For the same reasons that, in later years, the Cuban patriots made Key West their headquarters wherein to plot and plan to invade Cuba and wrest that island from the Spaniards' rule, so the buccaneers nested together at the Key of the Bones and plotted and planned many a raid on the Spaniards in nearby Cuba.

And when in course of time the Brethren of the Main were disbanded, and the dare-devil buccaneers were supplanted by the more villainous and infamous out-and-out pirates, these gangsters of the sea found that Key West and the neighboring keys were lairs exactly to their liking. Unlike the buccaneers, who preyed only upon the Dons and their ships, the men who sailed under the Jolly Roger regarded every merchantman as legitimate prey, regardless of nationality. And as practically all ships bound to or from Central American, Mexican and Gulf ports sailed through the Straits of Florida, the pirates at Key West reaped a rich harvest. But there is no evidence that any of the gentry ever remained permanently here, although from time to time the ships of nearly every famed pirate chieftain swung to their moorings in the harbor. Montfairs and Hawkins, Turnley and Augur, Calico Jack and Billy Bowlegs, McCarthy and Vane, Blackbeard and Stede Bonnet, Hawk and

England, Davis and Hornigold, Gasparilla and the Lafittes all put in to Key West at one time or another, until far and wide, the Key of the Bones and the Dry Tortugas became notorious as pirates' lairs, and honest merchant skippers gave them as wide a berth as was possible and did not breathe freely until the evil spots were many miles astern.

Naturally, in a place which was once the haunt of buccaneers and pirates, there are many tales of buried treasure, for pirates and hidden hoards always go hand in hand in popular fancy, even though all available evidence would indicate that these wolves of the sea were outrageous spendthrifts and rarely if ever put aside their ill-gotten gains in anticipation of the proverbial rainy day. Yet someone must have cached riches on the Keys, for more than one hoard of silver and gold has been found. Mexican gold, to the value of \$25,000, with a diamond ring and a golden candlestick, were found on Grassy Key by a man named Taylor. Many gold and silver coins have been found on Money Key and at Matecumbe. On Key Largo, a goodly hoard of coins bearing dates from 1720 to 1740 was unearthed, and various finds have been made at other spots and even at Key West.

From the time of its discovery until 1815, Key West remained a sort of no-man's-land, although claimed by Spain. In that year it was granted to Juan P. Salas, a young Spanish officer, as a reward for his gallantry. But Salas failed to do anything with his gift until 1821, when he disposed of it to Mr. John W. Simonton of Mobile for the sum of two thousand dollars, and in January of the



SIDE BY SIDE THE RAILWAY AND THE HIGHWAY SPAN THE KEYS



A VISTA OF THE MOTOR HIGHWAY ACROSS THE FLORIDA KEYS



following year the purchaser took possession of the little island.

It must have been a far from safe or secure place whereon a peacefully inclined and honest man could settle down, for the Gulf and neighboring seas still swarmed with pirates; and no doubt Mr. Simonton felt vastly relieved when, a few weeks later, the U.S. Sloop of War *Shark*, under command of Lieut. M. C. Perry, put into the harbor for the purpose of taking formal possession of the land which had been ceded to the United States by Spain. Following in the wake of the *Shark* came other naval vessels bringing supplies, stores and marines, and within a few months Key West had been transformed into a Naval Station and supply base under command of Commodore David Porter who had been given the decidedly difficult task of exterminating all pirates.

It was the first concerted and whole-hearted effort which had ever been made to rid the seas of this menace. But Commodore Porter was a thorough-going, a conscientious and a resourceful man, and he went at the task assigned him, hammer and tongs, as the saying is. Realizing that the cumbersome, deep-draft frigates of the Navy could not hope to run down the swift pirate craft, nor follow them into shallow bays and harbors, he armed and manned a fleet of small swift brigs and brigantines, and secured five twenty-oared naval barges. In addition to these he added the *Sea Gull* to his pirate-chasing equipment. This vessel was an old steam ferry boat which had been puffing back and forth across New York harbor, never dreaming—if ships can dream—that she



was destined to engage in the adventurous business of chasing pirates or would become famous as the first steam vessel of the United States Navy.

In rapid succession Commodore Porter captured or sank pirate ships, destroyed their lairs, made prisoners of the crews and hanged their leaders, until, at last, the seas were safe for shipping, and pirates were a thing of the past.

From that time on, Key West grew and prospered. In 1822 its total population was only 517, but from New England, Virginia, and especially from the Bahamas, colonists flocked to the little island at the tip of the Florida Keys. Not only did the natives of the Bahamas migrate to Key West, but some even brought their homes with them, ferrying their complete houses across the sea on barges; and several of these transported residences are still in use today. From a pirates' lair the Key of the Bones developed into an important port, and at one time it ranked twelfth of all American ports. The establishment of Naval and Military bases added vastly to the island's growth and prosperity, but the most lucrative industry was wrecking.

Whether or not the Key Westers and their fellows on the neighboring keys deliberately wrecked vessels in order to salvage their cargoes is a mooted question; but they certainly did not carry on this infamous business to the extent with which it was followed in the Bahamas. In fact, there was no reason for them to do so, for accidental wrecks were numerous enough to provide princely incomes for the salvagers. With no buoys, lights or marks to guide vessels among the shoals, reefs and

keys, many a ship left her bones in the neighborhood of Key West; and, as one old resident put it: "Ships came from all over the world to be wrecked on the Florida Keys."

And rich were the cargoes in those days of square-rigged sailing ships. Laces and silks, brandy and wines, silverware and crystal, gold coins and jewelry, coffee and spices, and stores and commodities of every imaginable kind were salvaged by the Key West wreckers. Many of the houses were completely furnished with articles salvaged from wrecked ships; many a store room was piled high with wines, liquors, foodstuffs and dry goods from foundered vessels. And what the wreckers and their families could not use for themselves was auctioned off at sales to which buyers came from Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Havana, New York, Boston and other great cities. In the year 1825, salvaged goods to the value of \$293,353 were sold in Key West; and, as duties and taxes on this, the government received over one hundred thousand dollars. After every storm and hurricane, wrecks were strewn along the keys, and fleets of fast sailing sloops and schooners sped out of Key West's harbor to wrest fortunes from the battered hulks. After the hurricane of 1846 over a million and a half dollars' worth of property was salvaged from wrecks and brought into Key West. No wonder that the island was prosperous, that the inhabitants fairly rolled in wealth, and that Key West won the reputation of being the richest city per capita in the entire United States.

But all this prosperity was not due entirely to wrecking. In 1831 the first cigar factory in the United States

was established at Key West, and in later years the city became the cigar-making center of the entire world, with its factories producing over one hundred million cigars annually, and employing over ten thousand persons. In the meantime, the Mexican War added vastly to the city's population and prosperity, for the erection of fortifications and harbor improvements gave employment to many men and brought hundreds of thousands of dollars into the island.

With Key West an important naval station, and with the channels buoyed and lighted, wrecking became a thing of the past. The Key Westers who had earned goodly incomes by salvaging took to sponging for a livelihood, and for a time the little key became the world's greatest sponge market, with a fleet of over one hundred and sixty vessels and over one thousand men engaged in the industry.

Then came the Civil War, and Key West became a strategic point of the utmost importance. It was heavily garrisoned and fortified, and was the only city south of the Mason and Dixon line that was never taken by the Confederate forces. It was following the Civil War that Key West reached the peak of its growth and prosperity. From a humble beginning, the cigar manufacturing business increased until there were more than one hundred factories. The cry of "Cuba Libre" had been raised in the Pearl of the Antilles, and Cuban patriots and exiles came flocking to Key West. Between 1868 and 1872, over fifteen thousand Cubans crossed the ninety miles of water to the little island, and the city boasted a population of more than thirty thousand.

Strange as it may seem, Key West's prosperity has ever been the result of others' adversity, and from the days of the pirates, fortunes have waned in times of peace and have waxed in times of war. The sponge fishery had declined to almost nothing following the establishment of the Greek colony of spongers at Tarpon Springs; wrecking had become merely a tradition, and the army and navy bases had been almost abandoned when the war with Spain threatened. Then just as the old buccaneers and the later pirates had chosen Key West as a most favorable spot from which to launch their forays against the Spaniards, so the United States government rushed warships and troops to the Key of the Bones in preparation for a possible invasion of Cuba, and for months the North Atlantic Squadron swung to their moorings in the bay while every available room ashore was crowded with officers, newspaper correspondents and photographers.

The city became an armed camp almost overnight, and when the *Maine* was blown up in Havana harbor it was a telegraph operator in Key West who first learned of the tragedy. At that time, Mr. Thomas K. Warren, who is now assistant cashier of the First National Bank at Key West, was a cable dispatcher, having previously been stationed at Havana. On the evening of February 15, 1898, Mr. Warren was in communication with his friend, Sr. Domingo Villaverde, the dispatcher at Havana, when he received word to "cut off the north" as his friend had something of importance to transmit in private. "There has just been a terrific explosion in the harbor," Villaverde ticked off. "A dense smoke cloud is

hanging above the spot where the *Maine* was anchored. I'm afraid she's been blown up. Don't let anyone know, yet. I'll tell you as soon as I learn the truth." It was not until nearly an hour later that the news of the disaster was received in Washington from Consul General Fitzhugh Lee in Havana. Moreover, Key West can proudly point to the fact that the first shot of the Spanish-American War was fired in her harbor, and the first Spanish ship captured was taken there also.

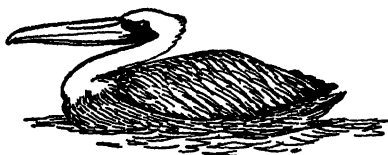
Again, during the World War, Key West rose from obscurity to importance, and the increase of Army and Navy forces and bases added greatly to the wave of prosperity which had followed the completion of the Key West extension of the Florida East Coast Railway.

Then came the Great Boom. Although the boom never affected the most southerly city as it did Miami and the mainland towns of Florida, still the backwash of its tidal wave flowed over the Key of the Bones, leaving, as its most tangible and only visible result, the magnificent Roosevelt Boulevard.

But Key West was dying. One by one the cigar factories had been deserted, as the manufacturers, offered greater inducements by Tampa, had moved to the Gulf Coast city taking with them nearly ten thousand Cuban residents of Key West. With the signing of peace by the Powers, the Naval and Army bases were practically abandoned. Sponging had long since become a profitless industry; the shipments of fish, which had reached a total of over four million pounds a year, had fallen off; ships which had formerly put into the port now passed it by and the airmail service to Havana—the first trans-

oceanic airmail service in the world—had been canceled. From a total of \$1,250,000, in 1910 the city's payroll by 1934 had dropped so low that it was inadequate to support a village of one thousand inhabitants, although Key West's population was nearly twelve thousand.

The case of the Key Westers seemed hopeless, and apathy, a resignation to their fate, had taken the place of hope, when the government decided that something must be done to save the city and the people, and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration took charge of Key West with the idea of rehabilitating the island and transforming it into a popular winter resort.



## CHAPTER XII

### OUR MOST SOUTHERLY CITY

Key West. First impressions. Old houses. Rehabilitating Key West. A crying need. Foreign atmosphere. Cubans and Conchs. Pleasant people. Key West as a winter resort. A tiny spot. Climate and attractions. Historic spots. A fisherman's paradise. Along the water front. A true "fish story."

THOSE who are addicted to forming opinions, and to taking likes and dislikes from first impressions, will be woefully disappointed in Key West, and will see nothing attractive about the town, for it must be admitted that at the present time the city presents a very dilapidated and down-at-the-heels appearance. But if one possesses an open mind, and can overlook the superficial lack of paint and the broken shutters of the houses, one will discover that Key West has a peculiar charm and a character all its own, while the sadly neglected homes are unique and often most attractive in their architectural details.

Although no two are just alike, yet nearly all have certain features in common. Usually they are two stories in height with outjutting balcony or projecting upper story above the lower veranda. The roofs are steeply pitched or of the "gambrel" type with ventilation scuttles; and in many, close up under the overhanging eaves, are tiny square windows designed to afford a free circulation of air between the sun-baked roof and the living rooms.

The majority also have a tiny cupola or "mirador" perched atop the ridgepole; lookouts whence, in the old days, the Key Westers could gaze seaward and sight approaching ships or the signals that a likely wreck was on the reefs. But the most typical and most delightful features of the Key West houses are the ornamental railings and elaborate trimmings of the balconies and the edges of the eaves. Of local design and all made by hand, there is an infinite variety of this decorative work, and often it is so fine, so delicate and so elaborate that it is veritable wooden lace.

With their steep roofs, their cupolas, their clap-boarded or battened walls and their green shutters they remind one a bit of Nantucket, Cape Cod or other New England coastal districts, with something reminiscent of the West Indies about them, yet totally distinct from either. But something seems lacking, and one is puzzled to know just what is missing. Then, suddenly, it dawns upon one that not a chimney is visible. In fact Key West is an almost chimneyless town, for only a few of the modern houses can boast of these adjuncts. Another peculiar feature of the city is the absence of stone houses. With the exception of a few brick and concrete structures, everything is of wood, and the stranger is mystified as to why, on an island composed of coral limestone where timber trees are non-existent, the inhabitants should have elected to import lumber rather than to employ the local rock for building purposes. But the solution of the mystery is simple. Nowhere is Key West more than a few feet above sea level, and to quarry rock for building would result in creating pools of stagnant



water and swamp holes. For that matter, it is such a tiny isle—barely three miles in length by a mile in width—that to employ the local stone for the construction of any considerable number of buildings would practically destroy the key.

When one examines the older wooden structures more carefully, one will find that many, in fact most, of them are built of solid mahogany, with massive timbers mortised and pinned, for the majority were constructed by ships' carpenters, often without the use of nails, and the strength and care with which they were built is proved by the fact that they have successfully weathered many a hurricane. In fact, they were built as if intended to withstand tumbling seas and an ocean voyage—as some did, for several actually were brought overseas from the Bahamas. Even the interior walls are of wood, painstakingly fitted and finished and sheathed, reminding one of a ship's cabin, and plastered walls are very rare.

It is a great shame that these masterpieces of carpentry and the joiner's arts have been permitted to deteriorate as they have. With shutters broken and drunkenly awry, with porches sagging, steps half rotted away or missing altogether, with roofs patched with bits of rusty tin, paintless and dismally gray from sun, rain and weather, they are eyesores and detract enormously from the appearance of the town. But repaired and painted they are most attractive and lend the city a distinct appeal.

Of course there are many modern houses and buildings; there are pretty cottages and bungalows embowered amid palms, shade trees and flowering vines; and there are excellent and almost imposing public buildings. But,

unfortunately, rows of miserable little shacks are far more numerous than the better class of dwellings; and, as is always the case, these ugly box-like shanties are far more obtrusive and conspicuous than the well-kept, well-painted residences. Even more regrettable is the fact that they are not confined to any one quarter or section of the town, but are sandwiched in among really respectable looking dwellings everywhere.

Under the rehabilitation program of the FERA it is planned to repair and repaint the houses that are worth saving, to destroy those beyond repair, and to establish restricted zones. But up to the present time (November, 1934) very little has been accomplished along these lines. To be sure, numerous ramshackle old structures have been demolished, unsightly vacant lots have been cleared of weeds and brush and transformed to parks and gardens, piles of accumulated rubbish have been removed, abandoned and broken-down old motor cars and trucks have been carted away, and the city has been cleaned and sanitized, until today it is a spotless town as far as streets and byways are concerned. An Englishman once remarked that "the Americans are a nation of plumbers," and, while sanitation and cleanliness are admirable and essential in a tropical or semi-tropical climate, yet it would seem that a trifle less plumbing and a little more painting would have produced more tangible results in Key West. In other words, Key West has had its face washed but it is still wearing the same old patched and ragged clothes. And if our national plumbing instinct must assert itself in Key West, there is ample opportunity to provide an adequate water supply. As it is, the

city water is not only limited in quantity but is so brackish that it cannot be used for drinking or culinary purposes, for which rain water serves, the result being that most houses have two kinds of water, and a far from plentiful supply of either.

Moreover, what is perhaps the most vital and important need of Key West has been completely ignored. That is the establishment of truck gardens and small farms. It seems little short of criminal that in a spot where nearly every variety of fruit and vegetable can be grown throughout the year the people should be entirely dependent upon produce brought from Miami, Tampa and the north, and poor quality produce at that. Even fruits which should be raised in quantities in Key West are imported from distant California. Why the powers that be should deem it more important to convert unoccupied land into flower gardens, lawns and parks, and to employ men to make a thousand or more wooden benches, rather than to utilize the properties and the labor for raising foodstuffs for the city is a mystery. And it would seem a very poor policy, and an encouragement of idleness and dependency, for the government to pay a dole to the stalwart, able-bodied blacks instead of providing them with plots of arable land, seeds and agricultural implements and compelling them to cultivate crops or go hungry.

It may be argued as an excuse for the lack of truck gardens that an abundant water supply is essential to grow vegetables, that insect pests are numerous, and that the demand for fresh vegetables is very limited. But if weeds and brush will grow as luxuriantly on vacant lots as they

do in Key West, if hibiscus and other cultivated shrubs, trees and flowering plants will grow as rapidly and as riotously as they do without artificial watering, then fruits and vegetables will succeed. As a matter of fact, it is only necessary to dig down a short distance to find moisture in plenty, for the surface of the land is but a few feet above sea level; and it would not be an expensive or a difficult matter to sink driven wells wherever an area of land was under cultivation. Moreover, the same objection, if valid, would hold against the parks and flower gardens. Insects are of course to be counted on, and unfortunately in Key West the hundreds of stray cats, plus human beings, have almost exterminated the native birds. But with the cats eliminated, the birds would increase, and for that matter there are as many varieties and as great numbers of insect pests on the Florida mainland as on Key West, yet an abundance of vegetables are grown on the mainland.

Finally, there is the proof of the pudding, as one might say, in the fact that the few natives who have planted tiny vegetable gardens in their back yards find no difficulty in raising excellent crops. As far as the demand is concerned, assuredly, if several huge truckloads of fruits and vegetables arriving in Key West each week can be consumed by the inhabitants, then there is an ample demand for local consumption. Yet at the present time many of the poorer people are literally starving and, in their weakened condition, are contracting tuberculosis and other diseases which, if they once gain headway, will be very difficult to stamp out. There is no earthly excuse for such a lamentable state

of affairs, for the sea fairly teems with fish, crawfish, crabs and shellfish, and there is no reason why the authorities should not employ some of the unemployed to carry on a fishery to supply nourishing food for the hungry.

Possibly, by the time this book is published, some headway may have been made in these directions, but at the present time no efforts have been made to provide home-grown food or to supply an abundance of sea food to the penniless and unemployed people rather than to dole out provisions in the guise of charity. Instead, all energies and expenditures appear to be focused on making Key West into a tourist resort. Whether this object will ever be accomplished is most problematical. Personally, I do not see why any great numbers of winter visitors should flock to the Key of the Bones. For those who desire gayety, Miami offers far greater attractions. To the wealthy, socially elect class, Palm Beach will appeal far more strongly than Key West. And the well-to-do disciples of Isaak Walton can enjoy their favorite sport under more comfortable conditions and with the same advantages much nearer home.

In addition to the limitations of one's activities on a tiny key barely three square miles in area, the bathing beaches are restricted in size, while the opportunities for recreation and the accommodations for visitors are very limited, particularly for persons of moderate incomes. Furnished cottages and apartments are scarce and far from cheap, while the hotels are by no means adequate for a real influx of visitors. However, there is a large and most attractive seaside hotel—The Casa

Marina—but this has been closed for several years, and even if enough visitors come to Key West to warrant opening, it is of the luxurious expensive type of hostelry and prohibitive to the average person.

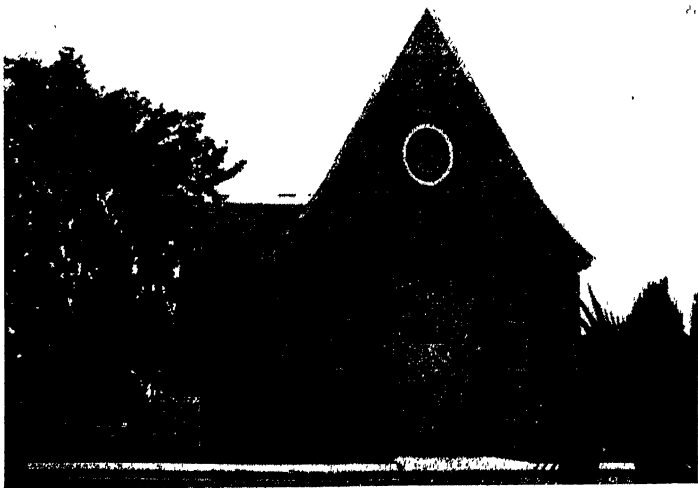
Finally, there is the matter of climate, which to many prospective winter resort seekers is the most important and vital question of all. Despite publicity and advertising, Key West is *not* truly in the tropics nor is it really tropical. Although the most southerly city in the United States, and several hundred miles farther south than Cairo, Egypt, that fact alone does not mean anything, for it must be borne in mind that New York is as far south as sunny Spain while London is as far north as Labrador. And while it is a fact that no frost has ever been known at Key West, yet during the winter months, when a “norther” blows, the thermometer drops to as low as 41 degrees, which is mighty cold in a land where there are no provisions for keeping warm.

Even in Havana, ninety miles farther south than Key West, one must wear heavy clothes and overcoats during the “northers,” and in Yucatan I have seen the natives bundled up in woolen mufflers and wind-breakers. As a matter of fact, Key West’s climate is not essentially different from that of Miami or Palm Beach. There are periods of really hot weather even in mid-winter, and while the average temperature—as recorded—is 77 degrees, the highest 93 degrees and the lowest 41 degrees, yet even during the warmer periods the nights are cool enough to make heavy blankets desirable, and during the daytime it is often raw and

cold. Even in November I have seen it so cold that heavy woolen garments, overcoats and furs were desirable. Neither does Key West possess a really distinct dry and a distinct wet season. While rains are more frequent during the summer, and the island boasts 73% of sunshine, and while its annual rainfall is recorded as only thirty-eight inches, of which only five inches fall during the winter season, yet it is liable to rain at any time, and I have seen two inches of rain fall in three hours in November. In short, the climate of Key West is greatly influenced by the climate of the mainland. If there is a cold wave in the northern or middle states there will be a decided drop of temperature in Key West if the wind is from the north, for there is no wide body of warm tropical water separating Key West from the mainland to temper the chill winds sweeping down across the States, as is the case with the Lesser Antilles, South America, Puerto Rico or even the Bahamas.

Nevertheless, Key West is thoroughly tropical in its vegetation, its flora and its appearance. Bougainvillea, hibiscus, jasmine, chalice flower vines, stephanotis and thunbergia, roses and oleanders, lantanas and gardenias, in fact all varieties of tropical and semi-tropical flowering plants and shrubs grow luxuriantly in every dooryard and riot over pergolas and veranda railings, while multicolored crotons, poincianas, mimosas and a seemingly endless variety of shade and palm trees are everywhere.

In Key West it is rather difficult to believe that one is still under the Stars and Stripes and within the borders of the United States, for there is a distinctively

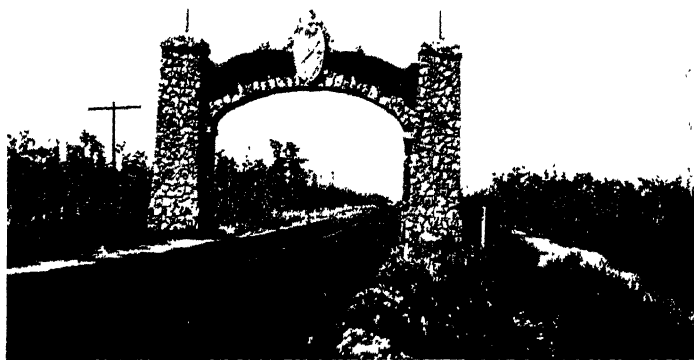


THE MOST SOUTHERLY HOUSE AND MOST SOUTHERLY CHURCH IN THE  
U. S., KEY WEST





ENTRANCE TO THE CASA MARINA HOTEL, KEY WEST



COMMEMORATIVE ARCH ON THE TAMIAMI TRAIL

and conspicuously foreign atmosphere about the town, which is not surprising when we stop to consider that a very large proportion of the population is Cuban with a large part of the remainder Conchs, as the people of Bahaman ancestry are called.

Moreover, the Spanish tongue is almost if not quite as much in use as is English, and the visitor who strolls along Duval Street of an evening might well imagine himself in Latin America, for everywhere, nearly everyone, regardless of race or ancestry, appears to be talking Spanish.

While the prevalence of Spanish names above shops, cafés, restaurants, bars and stores, the Spanish signs and advertisements, and the sound of the Castilian language lend a Latin-American touch to Key West, the names of the Anglo-Saxon business men and shopkeepers are as typically Bahaman, for everywhere are the same surnames that are so familiar to the visitor to Nassau. Curry and Pinder, Brice and Symonette, Bethel and Roberts, Malcolm and Lightborne, Albury and Pritchard, Russell and Saunders, all are there. But the similarity between Bahaman and Key West Conchs ends with their family names.

Unlike their relatives of the British Islands, the Key Westers (and regardless of racial or ancestral blood or origin all regard themselves as Key Westers) are about the most friendly, pleasant, hospitable, accommodating and altogether delightful people one could wish to meet. Everyone has a pleasant smile and a cheery greeting for the stranger; everyone welcomes the visitor with open arms; but not with outstretched grasp-

ing hands as in the Bahamas. Neither is the affability of the Key Westers superficial and artificial, a pose to lure more shekels from the visitors' pocketbooks. No, it is genuine, heartfelt and sincere. Nor are there the cliques, the petty jealousies, the envy and distrust that one meets everywhere in Nassau.

All, Cubans, Conchs or Yankees (and aside from Cubans and Bahamans the native sons and daughters are mainly of Yankee stock from New England and the north, for Key West never was occupied by the Confederates), all, I say, appear to be on the best of terms, to mingle and associate like one huge family. And they will go out of their way to do a visitor a service or a favor. I have known a Cuban shop-keeper to take supplies from his own larder to accommodate utter strangers who found themselves short of supplies on a Sunday when all the shops were closed; and everywhere one meets with the same courtesy, respect and consideration. In short, the Key Westers, whether Cubans, Conchs or Yanks, are what the Spaniards call "simpatico." Also, they are a self-respecting and rather proud people who prefer to be given work rather than charity; and never, during my residence on the key, have I seen a beggar on the streets.

Aside from the interesting architecture, the tropical verdure, the delightfully blue and turquoise sea and the pleasant people, there are a number of interesting and historic spots in Key West. There is the U. S. Naval Station, first established by Commodore Porter in 1822, and used as a base for his campaign against the pirates. Whenever there has been a war, the

naval base at Key West has become a hive of activity; but today it resembles a botanical garden rather than an adjunct to maritime warfare, and its only service is that of its radio station, the tall skeleton towers of which are the first signs of Key West to greet travelers approaching by sea or by land.

Another interesting place to visit is the lighthouse where the superintendent has gathered some large collections of native birds and a most valuable collection illustrating the history of lighthouses and buoys, lightships and beacons.

In the cemetery is the monument to the victims of the *Maine* tragedy, many of whom were brought to Key West for burial. To the island also, were brought the wounded men who were nursed and cared for in the Convent of Mary Immaculate which was converted into a hospital by the Sisters of the Holy Name. This convent school, which is a branch of the Mother House of Hochelaga at Montreal, is well worth a visit, for it contains a most interesting museum with a most valuable collection of relics of the *Maine*, including the ill-fated battleship's flag.

Then there are old Fort Taylor and the Martello Towers, commenced during the Mexican War and completed during the Civil War. Once considered almost impregnable, these old-fashioned fortifications of coral rock and red brick (brought from the north) are in a sad state of ruin today, while a fascinatingly incongruous note is struck by the modern airport with its hangar in juxtaposition to the quaint old fort above whose half ruined ramparts the signal flags whip in

the breeze.

There is also an aquarium, not yet completed, but designed to house several thousand fish, and advertised as the only outdoor tropical aquarium in the world. If and when this aquarium is ever completed, and, if so, if its design and construction prove a success—as is doubtful—it will be a valuable added attraction for visitors; although in a land where torrential downpours of rain are liable to occur at almost any time, the poor fish—both finned and bipedal—run no little risk of being drowned out in an open-air aquarium. However, the mere loss of captive fish is of little moment in Key West, for there are as good and far more fish in the sea roundabout than ever were caught.

In fact, Key West is literally a fisherman's paradise. There are over six hundred varieties of fish recorded from the adjacent waters, and some idea of their abundance may be obtained by the fact that four million pounds of fish have been shipped from Key West in a single year, that eighty thousand pounds have been taken in one night, and that, with a ten-foot leader and a single jig, over three thousand pounds of fish have been caught in a day. When one goes fishing about Key West one never knows what one may catch. It may be a one-pound grunt or a five-pound snapper, a ten-pound jack, a fifty-pound grouper or a thousand-pound tuna or jewfish. And whether the angler is a devotee of deep water or shallow water fishing, whether he prefers to dangle a line amid the reefs, cast from a boat, or troll, he can find abundant sport and be sure of a goodly catch. Here, in the waters of Key West, are

tarpon and sailfish, marlin and dolphin, bonito and kingfish, barracuda and amber jack and a host of other "game" fish, not to mention the ever-present sharks; and, believe me, for pure out and out sport, for excitement and adventure and a lively battle, a twelve- or fourteen-foot man-eater fills the bill.

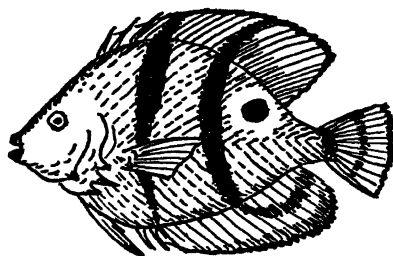
For those who love to go down to the sea in ships or a-fishing there is the Key West waterfront where, in the shade of the deserted sponge sheds, or basking like lizards in the sun on the stringpieces of the rickety old wharves, the leather-faced native fishermen foregather. Mostly Conchs, and all "Captains," with their own power boats, these weather-beaten sons of the sea might well pose as models for the old wreckers. For that matter, the blood of the wreckers flows in the veins of many, as does doubtless a few drops of piratical blood; and they are as full of the lore of the sea, of tales of treasure and pirates' loot, of quaint yarns and strange adventures as their clothes are full of salt and fish scales. One may while away many an hour in their company, with a pouch of tobacco for an open sesame, listening to their yarns, swapping stories and jokes, to come away, rich in anecdotes, plots, and local color sufficient to fill a dozen volumes.

But the strangest, most amazing of the fishermen's tales cannot equal Key West's true "fish story" of tame fish. Yes, not only tame but trained, for, incredible as it may seem, there is one man at the Key of the Bones who has trained fish to come at his call, feed from his hand and actually permit themselves to be lifted from the water.

One has only to visit Raoul's Club Miramar to witness this marvel. There, behind the buildings of the little road house beside the Boulevard, is a rock and cement pool containing over seventy kinds of fish—groupers and parrot fish, jack and angel fish, mullet and snapper, even trigger fish and a turtle or two. Stepping to the edge of the pool, Raoul or his wife claps hands and whistles, and instantly the fish rise from the depths and like a pack of dogs converge toward their master. Speaking in his native Spanish, Raoul calls a fish by name, and instantly a big grouper, a file fish or a snapper—as the case may be—darts forward to the stone steps. Dangling a bit of steak or crawfish a few inches above the water, the Cuban talks to the fish who leaps from the surface to seize the morsel. Again and again the feat is repeated, and to prove that it is not mere chance, that the fish actually know their names, Raoul calls to another, to a third and fourth, and each in turn swims forward to secure its portion of food from the man's fingers. But the most amazing features of this exhibition are yet to come. Calling softly to a striped grouper, Raoul coaxes it toward the steps, until at last, with a quick flop, the fish throws itself upon the shelving rock and permits itself to be stroked and scratched. It seems almost uncanny to watch a grouper, a mutton fish or a big red snapper lying there as its master runs his fingers down the scaly sides or scratches it lightly back of a pectoral fin, the while the fish shows every indication of perfect contentment as if thoroughly enjoying being fondled. But even this is nothing to what follows. Slipping his hand beneath one of

the fish, Raoul lifts it from the water, and while it lies upon his palm he feeds it dry cracker which the fish crunches and swallows as it rests there in the open air.

Doubtless many of my readers will smile cynically and regard this as just another "fish story," and a mighty tall one at that. But "believe it or not," as Ripley says, it is fact, not fiction; and one has only to visit Key West and motor out to Raoul's place in order to verify it.





## CHAPTER XIII

### TRAGIC ISLES

The Dry Tortugas. Romantic history. Stupendous Fort Jefferson. The drama of the fortress. Tragedies and horrors. A gigantic folly. The tragic story of Dr. Mudd. Heroism and devotion.

FAR out in the Gulf of Mexico, surrounded by a waste of waters, and sixty miles beyond Key West are the Dry Tortugas—forsaken, forgotten isles but replete with romance and the scene of some of the most dramatic incidents in all the history of our country. Here, back in 1513, Ponce de Leon landed, and, finding great numbers of sea turtles and turtle eggs upon the beaches of the keys, he named the group of ten islets the Tortugas or Turtles. Desert and barren, waterless and surrounded by dangerous reefs and shoals, the Tortugas offered no promise and were left to the sea birds and the turtles, and were given a wide berth by all navigators except when the ships' larders needed replenishing with turtle meat.

But the very isolation and dangers to navigation of the islets proved an attraction for certain rovers of the sea, and swashbuckling buccaneers and savage pirates, despicable wreckers and daring smugglers in turn found the Tortugas most admirably suited to their needs. Here were uncharted reefs and hidden anchorages wherein the freebooters and their ilk could find safe

refuge; here was a plentiful supply of shellfish, turtles and the eggs of countless thousands of sea birds, and East Key, Middle Key, Sand Key, Bird Key, Garden Key and Loggerhead Key became notorious haunts of the buccaneering, wrecking and piratical fraternity.

But with the passing of these gentlemen of fortune—or misfortune—from the seas, the Dry Tortugas were again abandoned by human beings until 1846 when the United States government became obsessed with the idea of establishing a naval base and supply station on the Dry Tortugas, together with a fortress that should be a second Gibraltar to command the entire Gulf of Mexico.

At that time the only structure on the islands was an old-fashioned lighthouse whose solitary keeper was the sole inhabitant of the lonely isles. And it is of interest to note that it was the home of this hermit of the Tortugas that was the scene of J. Fenimore Cooper's story of "Jack Tier."

That our government in times of peace should have prepared for war by such a stupendous undertaking as building a veritable citadel upon the Tortugas appears most remarkable, unless, as seems incredible, the Civil War was even then foreseen. Whatever the reason, the construction of Fort Jefferson went on apace. The difficulties of the undertaking were all but insurmountable; as an engineering feat it ranked among the most marvelous ever attempted, and the estimated cost was prodigious. Every pound of supplies, every ounce of provisions, every plank, brick, spike, bolt and timber had to be brought from the mainland, the nearest

point of which was over one hundred miles distant. And the fortress as planned was laid out on a titanic scale, designed to cover practically the entire twenty-five acres of dry land on Garden Key, and with foundations bathed in the waters of the Gulf itself. Besides the fortress proper there were to be barracks of ample size to house a thousand men, in addition to eighteen luxurious quarters for officers. These were to be the finest ever constructed, three stories in height, and four hundred feet in length with elaborate furnishings and wide verandas. And there were to be a hospital, a chapel, storehouses, houses for civilian employees, servants' quarters and workshops.

An army of laborers and slaves was transported to the bleak, hurricane-swept, forsaken isle. There were hordes of Negroes, hundreds of tough, hard-swearing, hard-working Irishmen, scores of laborers from the Mediterranean and the Scandinavian countries. And on that desolate isle they sweated and toiled under a blistering sun, beset by clouds of sand flies and millions of mosquitoes. Many sickened and died of fever; many more came down with scurvy; still others fell victims to dysentery and typhoid; but always there were others to fill their places, for the slaves could be purchased and forced to work and the high wages offered freemen lured many to endure the fearful sun, the fatal diseases, the pestiferous insects that made life on the Tortugas a living Hell.

Terrific gales swept across the Gulf, tearing down the flimsy shelters and even blowing the precious food away. Sand storms whipped the men's faces and bodies

with sharp bits of broken shell and coral that cut like tiny razor blades. Terrific seas beat and thundered on the ragged coral rocks and wrenched and tore and destroyed the masonry placed by killing labor and the cost of human lives, until the building of the pyramids appeared like mere child's play compared to the struggle to erect this stupendous fortress on a desolate wave-lashed isle. But stone by stone, brick by brick, Fort Jefferson gradually took form, yet so tremendous was the cost that it has been computed that the structure cost the government more than one dollar for every brick in the gigantic walls!

Of course, practically all work was done by hand; there were none of the modern, powerful, almost human machines to simplify and expedite such construction works—no great steam shovels, cranes and conveyors; no electric driven drills, power compressors and concrete mixers; no rapidly moving elevators or power hoists—and it was estimated that fourteen years would be required to complete the gigantic fortress!

But more than five times fourteen years have passed and the vast monument to governmental folly and waste remains unfinished. Today the semi-ruined, uncompleted mass of Fort Jefferson stands, more like a medieval citadel than a modern military structure, with its bastions and castellated turrets, its massive cornices, its sharply pointed roofs. Forsaken and alone, untenanted by man, the stupendous pile looms above the sea upon the little key, its bastions draped with weeds and gray-leaved shrubs, its timbers rotting and falling, its sally port half choked with the débris of nearly a

century of wind and weather, screeching hurricanes, tropical sun and torrential rains. The great moat, seventy-five feet in width and ten feet in depth, still filled with the green water of the Gulf, is the haunt of herons and kingfishers, and good-sized palms grow from the broken pavement of the parade. What stories those weather-worn stones, those massive walls, those rifle-slotted embrasures could tell could they but speak! Tales of drama and tragedy, of agonies and sufferings to make one's blood run cold; and tales of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion.

The Bastile, the Château d'If, even the Black Hole of Calcutta could scarcely equal Fort Jefferson for the horrors that have taken place within its walls; for the mighty pile, designed as a fortress, never served its purpose but was used during the Civil War as a federal prison. And lack of all sanitary safeguards, ignorance, mosquitoes, foul water and food, and the climate, resulted in a mortality among both prisoners and garrison that perhaps has never been equaled. Malaria, typhoid, yellow fever, dysentery and other fatal maladies found countless victims here on this desert isle, and between whiles hurricanes played havoc and brought death and destruction.

Everywhere within the fortress are mute evidences of the fury of these terrific storms. Walls have been transformed to piles of *débris*, roofs have been torn off and scattered about like chaff, while iron work, the machinery and coal conveyors—brought to Fort Jefferson during the Spanish-American War at which time the Navy spent nearly a million dollars on repairing

the fort and erecting a coaling station—are twisted, bent and tangled. Abandoned by the Navy, the cable station on the island was soon discontinued. By 1901 the only inhabitants were three wireless operators, and with the destruction of the station and the lighthouse by fire the place was deserted.

Then, during the World War, vessels once more visited the desolate key and the echoes of human footsteps again resounded through the ruined fortress, for Fort Jefferson became for a space a lead mine! From Key West men were sent to the Tortugas to dig lead from the casements and gutters, but with the close of the war the American flag was hauled down and again lizards scuttled unafraid over gun emplacements and escarpments, and weeds, vines and thorny shrubs spread riotously over the wreckage.

Yet in places traces of the old splendor and elaborate furnishings still remain. Patches of colored plaster and frescoed walls yet cling to the stones. Iron-grilled balustrades still lead beside curving stairways to officers' quarters with arched doorways and elaborately carved woodwork. But everything that is ruinable has fallen into ruins, and everything which, by any stretch of the imagination, could be of use or value to man has been torn apart and looted. For years both Cubans and Americans have carried schooners full of firewood from the old fort; paneling and furniture have been hewn and cut into vessels' timbers and planking, and everywhere are evidences of out-and-out vandalism—woodwork splintered and marred, carvings shattered and chipped, furnishings deliberately broken and thrown

about by visitors possessed with an inexplicable mania for destruction.\*

But the most impressive feature of Fort Jefferson is its immense size. Innumerable archways stretch seemingly endlessly. Hundreds of gun ports pierce the mighty walls. Countless cisterns and brick conduits gape black and bottomless in the pavements. It seems as if the entire fortress were underlaid with water, and a misstep at any moment is liable to send the visitor plunging downward into the stagnant foul depths. One shudders as one gazes into the noisome wells, for tradition says that these seemingly bottomless water-filled pits were used for purposes other than to supply drinking and washing water to the garrison; that many a man has been dropped into these fearsome cisterns leaving no trace of his vanishing. Who knows? There have been black crimes, and foul inhumanities a-plenty in the dismal depths of Fort Jefferson, and one or one hundred added to the list would mean little.

It is on the upper parapet that Fort Jefferson's titanic proportions really dawn upon one. From this giddy height, forty feet in width, one gazes down upon the sparkling blue sea on one side and the parade on the other. Fully fifteen acres in area is this parade, yet it is but a small portion of the whole structure. And one marvels, not only at the stupendous labor that was called upon to erect the fortress, but at the care, the

\* While this is being written the Federal Government is planning to repair the old fort and to maintain it as a national monument. A small army of unemployed ex-service men is to be sent to the Tortugas to clean up and restore Fort Jefferson to as nearly its original condition as possible.

art, and the engineering skill displayed. The millions of bricks—it is said there are fourteen million all told—are all carefully “pointed.” The giant blocks of granite are tooled, squared and chamfered. The cornices and arches are carved with ornate moldings. And how, one marvels, did human hands, simple winches and tackle ever raise those tremendous ten- and fifteen-inch guns to the lofty battlements where they still remain?

At one side of the parade is an unfinished wall still marked by the bullets of execution squads, and half hidden by the weeds and brush are the gravestones of men and women who passed away and found their last resting places within the confines of this strange fortress. One and all, the inscriptions read much the same, for, beneath the name, the rank and the date of the birth of the deceased, are always the words “Died of Yellow Fever.” But only the officers and their families were thus honored by being given Christian burial in marked graves. The others—men and women, servants and soldiers, laborers and slaves—were hastily buried in quicklime, partly because there was no time in which to inter the bodies otherwise, and partly in a vain hope of thus checking the spread of the terrible infection.

But there is one grave there on the parade which is unmarked save by a rude wooden cross bearing no name, no inscription; a mystery grave if ever there was one, for always there are fresh flowers upon it. No one knows, no one can even guess who comes to the lonely islet to reverently place the blossoms on this grave of the unknown. No boat has ever been seen to arrive at or leave the islet at the times when flowers have been

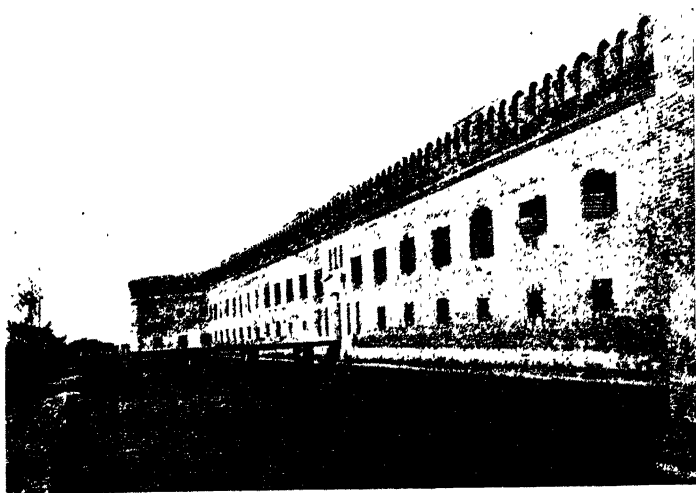


placed on the grave, no human being has ever been seen in the act of placing them there, and the Cuban fishermen cross themselves and mutter a prayer when they pass near the weather-beaten cross, and vow that the blooms are placed there by invisible spirit hands. But if spirits or ghosts are responsible, then of a surety they resort to most material means, for the bouquets are placed in glass pickle jars!

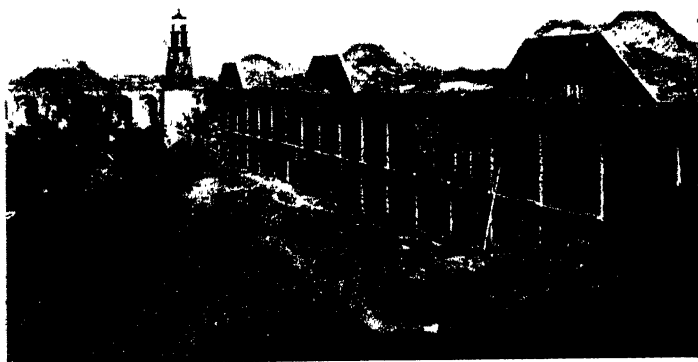
Yet surely, if spirits ever walk, if ghosts ever haunt the scenes of their mortal sufferings and travails, then Fort Jefferson should be thronged with wraiths, and its empty corridors should echo nightly to eerie wails, the clank of chains, maniacal screams and blood-curdling groans.

At times the dungeons and cells of Fort Jefferson have been crowded with more than one thousand prisoners. One thousand men in tiny rooms lacking all ventilation, all sanitation, all sunlight; cells damp and moldy, humid and foul with the stagnant, breathless oven-hot air. One thousand wretches, black and white, hardened criminals and mere deserters, murderers and political offenders, herded together, fed on viands no self-respecting pig would devour, without work or recreation to occupy their minds, swarming with vermin. No wonder that the principal labor of the trustees and the garrison was burying the dead. They died like flies during the best of times and too rapidly to be buried during times of epidemics.

No wonder the prisoners made desperate, almost suicidal, attempts to escape. And many succeeded, though



WALLS AND MOAT OF FORT JEFFERSON, DRY TORTUGAS



INSIDE THE WALLS, FORT JEFFERSON, DRY TORTUGAS



how they managed it is inexplicable; for everywhere were armed sentries; the windows of the cells were mere slits, less than six inches in width on the outside of the five-foot walls; the doors were massive, with heavy timber bars set in iron slots instead of locks, and the prisoners were not permitted to possess any article which could possibly be used as weapon or tool; nothing of metal was allowed, not even a belt or suspender buckle or comb, and the spoons were of wood or soft pewter. Yet escape they did; and, although many met a worse fate than life imprisonment in Fort Jefferson, others won to freedom after sufferings, hardships and perils that would shame the Count of Monte Cristo.

There was one man, Harry Smith, who not only escaped once, but again and again. Neither cells, bars, locks nor chains could hold him. He appears to have thoroughly enjoyed slipping from leg and neck irons to confound his jailers, and instead of fleeing the place he would wander about, stealing anything he found, and tossing it into the moat, or terrifying the women and children by suddenly appearing before them. In desperation the authorities fastened a wheel-like hobble about his neck, but by some uncanny means Smith managed to remove it the first night. They chained him to bolts riveted in a wall, but like a veritable Houdini he slipped from his shackles and spent a merry night flooding the storerooms with molasses from barrels whose bungs he bashed in, and mixing flour, salt, sugar and other provisions in an inedible mess. As a result, more irons were loaded onto him and he was spread-

eagled by heavy chains to the floor of the dungeon. Apparently Smith had tired of playing pranks, so this time when he wriggled free of his chains he secured a step-ladder on which he floated to Loggerhead Key, more than two miles away. Captured, he was brought back to Fort Jefferson and was covered with a regular network of steel. But the heavy chains were no more to Smith than the pack threads of the Liliputians to Gulliver; and this time he obtained everlasting freedom, for on the following day his body was found, washing back and forth in the waves near the sally port of the fortress.

But scarcely a day passed when an escaped prisoner's corpse was not found. Some were drowned in trying to swim the moat or were killed by the sharks; others reached one or another of the outlying reefs only to perish miserably of thirst and starvation, and still more were shot by the ever-watchful sentries as they swam through the surrounding seas in their desperate attempts at freedom.

Of all the escaping prisoners the most colorful and spectacular was Colonel Grenfell. No one knows who he really was, but his full name, St. Leger Grenfell, hinted of English birth, and it was common rumor that he was a nobleman. Over six feet in height with a heavy black beard, Grenfell, in red flannel shirt and high boots, might have posed for a swashbuckling pirate; and the life he had led before his incarceration at Fort Jefferson savored more of a fictional adventure story than of real life. Australia, Africa, South and Central America and the South Seas had all been his stamping grounds. He had been bushwhacker, sailor, sol-

dier of fortune, gun runner, revolutionist and goodness knows what else. Wherever there was trouble and fighting to be found there was Grenfell, and early in the war he joined the Confederate army. Captured by the Federals, he was convicted of taking part in the hotel-burning plot in Chicago, and was sentenced to life imprisonment in Fort Jefferson. But the massive walls and dank cells of the fortress could not confine an adventurous spirit like Grenfell. By some unknown means, freeing himself from his cell, he liberated three other prisoners, overcame the guard, and, forcing the latter to accompany them, Grenfell and his fellows embarked in a tiny skiff. Why they were not capsized and drowned is a miracle, for a terrific gale was blowing and mountainous seas were running. In fact, the escape was largely due to the storm, for the sentries, never dreaming that even the most desperate convicts would dare brave the tempest, were lax, and had huddled for protection in the shelter of the battlements. Yet Grenfell and his comrades lived through and reached Cuba in safety.

Among those who thus escaped with Grenfell was a man named Adair, perhaps the most desperate and greatest rascal ever confined in the old fortress prison. Adair's first attempt to escape was made in company with a Negro prisoner. Crawling through a gun embrasure the two slipped into the moat, evaded the sharks with which it swarmed and reached the seashore. Here they found a plank of driftwood and on this floated across the channel to Loggerhead Key. Here they stole a boat and headed for Cuba where they ar-

rived safely. But no sooner were the two on dry land than Adair, in order to secure funds, proceeded to sell his black companion as a slave. This led to his apprehension, and the two were returned to Fort Jefferson by the Spanish authorities. Adair, having once tasted freedom, was determined to win his liberty, and, despite the handicap of a ball and chain riveted to his legs, he escaped and reached Loggerhead Key where he was again captured. But the third time proved the charm, as the old saying goes; and, in company with Grenfell, Adair passed forever beyond the portals of grim Fort Jefferson.

During the yellow fever outbreaks it was not uncommon for a number of prisoners to escape at one time, for the burial squads were composed of prisoners who transported the bodies to Bird Key within sight of the prison. Once on the little pile of rocks and sand it was a simple matter for the grave diggers to head for Cuba and freedom merely by overpowering their guard; and the ease with which this was often accomplished leads us to suspect that the soldiers were as heartily sick of Fort Jefferson as were the prisoners and were only too glad to get well away from the fever-ridden spot.

Of all the countless thousands of men who, first and last, were imprisoned at Fort Jefferson, the most famous was Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, and his sentence and confinement will ever remain one of the most flagrant miscarriages of justice and most inhuman exhibitions of ingratitude in the history of America.

Dr. Mudd was a fairly prosperous country doctor in

southern Maryland, a kindly, quiet man beloved by all the people of the countryside where he practiced, and far too busy ushering human beings into and out of the world to bother his head with politics. And when, at four o'clock one April morning, he was aroused by two horsemen, and found one of them with a broken leg which he was told had resulted from being thrown from his mount, the kindly and obliging doctor hastily pulled on his clothes, hurried downstairs, and set and splinted the broken limb. Then, insisting that the patient must rest for a few hours, he served the strangers with coffee and food ere speeding them on their way. Little did Mr. Mudd dream of the long years of anguish and suffering, of brutal treatment and cruelty which were to be the result of his innocent and humane act. And not until he read of Lincoln's assassination, and that Booth had broken his leg in leaping from the presidential box to the stage, did Dr. Mudd suspect the identity of his early morning visitors.

Even then he might have remained unmolested and unharmed had he kept the episode a secret, but he was an honest, straightforward man and he at once informed the authorities of the part he had innocently played in aiding Booth's escape. As a result of his honesty and frankness, Dr. Mudd was arrested, tried by a military court and sentenced to life imprisonment at Dry Tortugas.

Not only was this the worst of all prisons in the territory of the United States, but, in addition, since it was under military jurisdiction of the federal army, every officer and man of the garrison was filled with the



most bitter hatred for the man who had so unjustly been convicted of being a party to the murder of the martyred president. No more touching and dramatic documents could be imagined than the pathetic letters penned by Doctor Mudd to his despairing wife, and as all these letters were censored, and the prisoner was careful to say nothing to which objection could be made, we can imagine what the actual conditions must have been.

Convicted almost wholly on the testimony of Negro slaves, knowing himself innocent of all blame or crime, and incarcerated in a foul prison where he was the object of the most intense bitterness and hatred possible, no wonder Dr. Mudd was "subjected to cruelties almost beyond the powers of human endurance."

At first Dr. Mudd was employed as a hospital orderly, not through any kindness or leniency on the part of his jailers, but because he was a physician and there was no one else capable of filling the job. Again and again he had opportunities to escape, but, realizing that to do so might be construed as an admission of his guilt, he remained, determined to live quietly and to endure his sufferings in the hope that in this way he might earn a commutation of his sentence. How and by what superhuman self-control he managed to resist the temptation for week after week is amazing. But the knowledge that his farm had been devastated by Union soldiers, that his wife and family had been reduced to beggary, the fact that he, a southern gentleman, was guarded, ordered about and manhandled by Negro soldiers, and his desire to reach some spot where he might

obtain a new trial and justice, so preyed upon his mind that two months after he had reached Fort Jefferson he attempted to escape by stowing away on the transport *Thomas A. Scott*.

Being discovered before the vessel sailed, he was manacled and chained hand and foot in a vile cell over the sally port. Here for a time he was kept in solitary confinement on a meager diet of moldy bread and water, and was then put to hard labor wheeling sand and chipping mortar from old bricks in the broiling sun. Meanwhile nearly fifty prisoners had escaped from the island, among them the man Kelly, who had been with the doctor in his futile attempt. After three months at the sand pile, always heavily ironed, Dr. Mudd was given the work of washing down six bastions daily, but was not permitted to speak to any other prisoner, and for twelve hours out of every twenty-four he was heavily chained in a dungeon reeking with moisture and vile gases and stench from the moat. He was in constant agony from the raw sores chafed by the irons on his ankles and wrists, his hair fell out by handfuls, and his eyes began to fail. In his pitiful letters to his wife he mentioned the suffocating heat, the millions of mosquitoes, hordes of fleas and vermin and stated that the pests permitted no rest night or day. For sixteen terrible months the unfortunate man endured this perpetual torment, yet even his lot was not so fearful as that of some of his fellow-prisoners.

One poor devil, an old man sick with dropsy, applied to the garrison doctor for treatment, only to be laughed

at and commanded to work. When he fell from weakness he was loaded with a ball and chain and ordered to go on with his labor. Sinking to the ground half-dead he was trussed up in the sun for a half day; then, taken to the wharf and bound with ropes with a fifty-pound ball lashed to his feet, he was tossed overboard.

It seems hardly credible that such inhuman acts of cruelty and deliberate murder could have been perpetrated in a federal prison barely seventy years ago, yet there is ample documentary evidence of this, and even far worse cases, and the darkest pages of the Inquisition can scarcely present more refined tortures, more callous disregard for human suffering and human life than the history of Fort Jefferson. Men were flogged, chained, spread-eagled, triced up by their thumbs, mutilated, starved, tortured in every conceivable way, and were shot, thrown to the sharks or beaten to death on the slightest provocation.

But there was no possible excuse for maltreating Dr. Mudd; and, being a quiet, tractable and intelligent man, he was at last transferred to the carpenter shop. It was while he was there that the dreaded yellow fever appeared upon the island to add its horrors to the horrible spot. Rapidly the deaths increased. The prison surgeon, Joseph Smith, and his son were stricken and died. Nearly every man on the island was down with the terrible disease. Panic set in and the colony was reduced to horrible helplessness.

Then unfortunate, maltreated Dr. Mudd stepped forward and volunteered to take charge as fort physician. Searching for any port in the storm of death

about them, the authorities ordered his chains knocked off and he was released in order that he might devote his skill to saving his persecutors. Regardless of his own life he worked with sublime heroism. And never was one half-starved, prison-wracked man faced with a more hopeless situation. More than half of the victims of yellow fever were also suffering from scurvy, while deaths from the latter disease were mounting daily. There was no way of getting aid from shore; every vessel had been ordered away to escape contagion, no one dared come near the pestilence-ridden spot even to leave mail or supplies, and there were scarcely enough well men left to bury the dead.

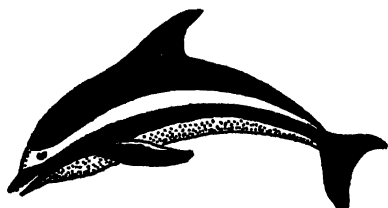
At first the officers had been buried within the fort and their graves marked, while the enlisted men had been hastily interred on Bird Key, but with the rapid increase in deaths there was no time to do this and the bodies of officers and privates, men, women and children alike, were heaped on pyres and burned or were buried in quicklime. Very soon there were but ten men left to answer roll call, only ten men out of the thousands who had formed the garrison and the inmates of the prison! Tirelessly Dr. Mudd worked day and night; sleepless, going without food. Every officer was down with the disease; guards and sentries were sick or dead; and anyone could have escaped without hindrance, yet Dr. Mudd worked on. At last, in October, 1867, he was stricken down; but Fate was kind and by a miracle he survived, and as soon as his strength would permit he again fell to work. But the worst was over, a cold norther had carried the swarms of *Stegomyia* from the

key, and deaths ceased.

The survivors of that terrible epidemic could not say enough in praise and gratitude for Dr. Mudd's self-sacrificing devotion and medical skill. Without his knowledge they drew up a testimonial and a petition to the President asking that he be pardoned. But in some inexplicable way the document never reached President Johnson, and Dr. Mudd was again cast into his dungeon in chains and was put to the hardest menial labor.

From October, 1868, until March, 1869, this cruel, utterly uncalled-for treatment continued, treatment that can only be explained—along with the mysterious disappearance of the petition—on the supposition of secret but influential enemies who had reason to fear for themselves if Dr. Mudd were released.

But at last President Johnson heard of the doctor's noble service during the epidemic and granted him a full pardon in March, 1869. Returning, broken in health and spirit, to his ruined home in Maryland, ostracised by his former friends, without money or practice, he lived but a few years, and at the age of forty-nine died of pneumonia contracted by driving for miles through a blinding storm to attend a patient.



## APPENDIX

### IMPORTANT DATES IN FLORIDA'S HISTORY

- 1470-1500—Florida discovered by some unknown navigator, perhaps by Christopher Columbus.
- 1502—First map showing Florida. The Alberto Cantino Map.
- 1513—Ponce de Leon landed near St. Augustine.
- 1518—Grijalva visited Florida.
- 1519—Alonso Alvarez de Pineda cruised among Florida Keys and along the Gulf coast.
- 1521—Ponce de Leon returned to Florida and was mortally wounded by an Indian arrow. He died in Havana.
- 1524—D'Allyon voyaged on Florida coast. Diego Miruello visited Florida.
- 1528—Pamfilo de Navarez explored western Florida and landed exploring expedition.
- 1528-36—Alvar Nuñez de Cabeza de Vaca, a member of Navarez's expedition, the first European to cross the continent, wandered for seven years among Indians, with three companions, and eventually reached Lower California.
- 1539—Hernando de Soto landed at Tampa Bay. Died May 21, 1542, and buried in Mississippi River.
- 1549—Dominican friars under Luis de Barbastro massacred by Indians.
- 1559—Tristan de Luna y Arellano landed at Pensacola. Fleet destroyed by hurricane.
- 1560—Oranges introduced from Spain.

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- 1562—Jean Ribault landed near mouth of St. Johns River which he christened River May.
- 1564—Réné de Laudonnière sighted Florida and landed near present town of St. Augustine. Founded first Huguenot colony in Florida near present site of Jacksonville.
- 1565—Huguenots visited by Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins.
- 1565—Huguenots attacked by Pedro Menendez de Aviles.
- 1565—Menendez founded St. Augustine, September 6.
- 1565—French Huguenots massacred by Spaniards under Menendez at Matanzas.
- 1566 (Sept. 28)—Fray Pedro Martinez killed by Indians near Fernandina. First Jesuit martyr in North America.
- 1568—Dominique De Gourgues landed at mouth of St. Marys River (present site of Fernandina) April 7.
- 1568—De Gourgues attacked Spanish at San Mateo (St. Johns River) killing or taking prisoners the entire garrison.
- 1569—Menendez arrived from Spain and rebuilt San Mateo. Returned to Spain.
- 1576—Pedro Menendez (nephew of founder of St. Augustine) killed by Indians in Florida.
- 1586—Sir Francis Drake attacked St. Augustine, destroyed the fort and sacked and burned the town.
- 1593—Over twenty missions had been established in Florida.
- 1593—Second fort built at St. Augustine, on present site of Fort Marion.
- 1594—Mission at New Smyrna built.
- 1595—Missions attacked by Indians, buildings burned

and monks slain.

- 1595—Galleon *Santa Margarita* with over five millions in silver struck a shoal near Palm Beach and went to the bottom.
- 1598—Mission of San Franciscans at St. Augustine destroyed and inmates killed by Indians.
- 1599—Mission on site of present State Arsenal at St. Augustine destroyed by fire.
- 1602—09—Pedro de Ybarra governor of Florida.
- 1606—Pirates committed depredations on east coast. Twenty captured by Spaniards and hanged.
- 1607—England laid claim to Florida.
- 1608—28—Dutch under Admiral Heyn raided Spanish shipping and towns.
- 1626—Luis Borja de Rojas, governor of Florida, declared mosquitoes so bad they killed many men.
- 1630—Sir Robert Dudley charted the entire coast of Florida.
- 1637—Spaniards made raid on Apalachee Indians and captured vast numbers who were brought to St. Augustine and sold as slaves.
- 1648—St. Augustine had a population of 2000, including slaves.
- 1655—Governor Salazar died of yellow fever. Many other deaths from the same disease.
- 1657—Indians revolted and captured and hanged the ex-governor.
- 1665—Davis, English buccaneer, attacked and sacked St. Augustine.
- 1683—Sea wall commenced at St. Augustine.
- 1686—Indians joined British and drove Spaniards from all territory north of St. Johns River.
- 1696—Pensacola founded.
- 1696—Bark, *The Reformation*, carrying Quakers for



William Penn's settlement at Philadelphia wrecked near Cape Florida. Shipwrecked men reached St. Augustine and were entertained and aided by the Spaniards.

1702—British from South Carolina attacked Spanish in Florida. St. Augustine captured but abandoned upon approach of Spanish warships.

1704—Ex-governor Moore of Carolina, with twenty-five white men and over one thousand Indians, defeated Governor Juan Mexia and his forces in a desperate battle near Tallahassee. Fifteen hundred Indian allies of Spain captured and sold into slavery in Georgia.

1708-10—Famine in St. Augustine. People forced to subsist on cats, dogs, rats and pets. Many died of starvation.

1715—Spanish treasure fleet of 14 ships wrecked near Key Largo.

1716—Spanish salvagers who had recovered over half a million of treasure from wrecked galleons attacked by British from Jamaica and robbed of the treasure.

1717—Spanish with Indian allies attacked British in Carolina but were repulsed with heavy loss.

1718—Spanish governor ordered all Indians exiled to interior. Over four hundred women and children left to care for crops butchered by British settlers from Georgia.

1718—French built a fort at St. Josephs Bay (Gulf coast).

1719—Pensacola changed flags four times. Attacked by French it capitulated. French fleet captured by Spaniards near Cuba, refitted and sent back to recapture Pensacola. A month later, French

- ships arrived and captured the city. Later restored to Spain.
- 1722—Peace between France and Spain.
- 1725-27—Border wars between Spanish and British. Colonel Palmer devastated Florida to St. Augustine. Chapel of Nuestra Señora de la Leche (where first Mass was celebrated in Florida) destroyed by British.
- 1727—Severe earthquake shook St. Augustine.
- 1739—England declared war on Spain.
- 1740—Oglethorpe, with a force of two thousand Indians, attacked and captured Spanish forts on the St. Johns River. Later he attacked St. Augustine but was repulsed.
- 1741—First indigo plantations established.
- 1742—Spanish forces attacked Brunswick, Ga., but were defeated.
- 1743—Oglethorpe again marched on St. Augustine but was forced to retire.
- 1748—Peace between Spain and England.
- 1748—Castle of San Marco, St. Augustine, completed.
- 1750—Yellow fever epidemic at St. Augustine.
- 1756—San Marco reconstructed to form present Fort Marion.
- 1762—War declared between England and Spain.
- 1762—Havana captured by British.
- 1763—Peace declared and Havana exchanged for Florida by England.
- 1767—Dr. Andrew Turnbull started colony of New Smyrna.
- 1776—Revolutionary War. John Hancock and John Adams burned in effigy in St. Augustine.
- 1776—Free Masonry first established in Florida.
- 1777—England at war with American colonies, Spain,

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France and Holland.

1781—West Florida invaded by Spanish who captured Pensacola.

1783—First newspaper in Florida, *East Florida Gazetteer*, St. Augustine.

1783—Revolutionary War ended.

1783—England traded Florida to Spain in return for Bahama Islands.

1788—William Bowles proclaimed himself "King of Florida" and with Indian allies captured Spanish forts on the Gulf coast.

1790—Treaty between United States and Creek Indians to return runaway slaves.

1800—José Gaspar (Gasparilla) noted pirate, established headquarters at Gasparilla Island, Charlotte Harbor.

1801—Gasparilla captured Spanish treasure ship with over ten millions in bullion and coin, as well as a Spanish princess whom he murdered when she repulsed his amorous advances.

1803—Louisiana purchased by United States.

1808—Fernandina declared a free port.

1809—French claimed Florida.

1810—Republic of West Florida proclaimed.

1811—Republic of East Florida proclaimed.

1812—War with England and United States.

1813—Amelia Island and Fernandina taken by republicans who attacked St. Augustine unsuccessfully.

1813—All northern Florida controlled by Americans.

1813 (October)—Liberal Constitution granted Florida by Spain.

1813—All American troops withdrawn from Florida.

1814 (Apr. 16)—Engagement between British brig *Epervier* and U. S. sloop of war *Peacock* fought

- off Cape Carnaveral, in which the *Peacock* was the victor.
- 1814 (August)—British took Pensacola and hoisted British flag.
- 1814—General Andrew Jackson took Pensacola.
- 1814—Republic of East Florida ceded to United States.
- 1814—Peace declared between United States and Great Britain.
- 1816—Negro renegades' fortress on Apalachicola River attacked by U. S. troops under General Gaines. Shot exploded magazine and over 275 inmates killed. Fort with booty of \$200,000, and vast stores of ammunition captured. Walls of fort were fifteen feet in height and eighteen feet thick.
- 1816—Trading post established at Jacksonville, formerly known as Cowfordia.
- 1817—McGregor took possession of Amelia Island in names of Venezuela and Argentine Republic. Formed an independent state frequented by pirates and convicts.
- 1817—Lieutenant Ambrister and trader named Arbuthnot hanged for inciting Indians to rebellion.
- 1818—United States seized Pensacola on grounds that Spaniards were inciting Indians to attack settlers.
- 1818-19—West Florida under provisional government established by Andrew Jackson.
- 1819—Cession of Florida to United States ratified Feb. 22.
- 1819—Key West purchased by Mr. John W. Simonton for \$2000.
- 1820—Vessel carrying five millions in gold, paid by United States to Spain, wrecked near mouth of Suwanee River. Never recovered.

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- 1821—Key West first settled.
- 1821—Florida delivered over to United States, July 7.
- 1821—Pirates of Gulf attacked and Gasparilla committed suicide.
- 1822—First Legislative Council established at Pensacola.
- 1822-25—John James Audubon in Florida.
- 1824—Prince Napoleon Achille of Naples settled near Tallahassee and named his estate Lipona.
- 1825—Road built from St. Augustine to Pensacola at cost of \$75 per mile.
- 1826—Prince Napoleon married Mrs. Gray, grandniece of George Washington.
- 1826—Proposal to build a canal from Fernandina to Gulf.
- 1826—Wreckers on Florida Keys active.
- 1829-30—City of St. Joseph established. Became thriving city of 4000 inhabitants and large trade. First great land boom. Declared richest and wickedest city in U. S. By 1850 it was practically deserted and forgotten. Abandonment largely due to yellow fever epidemic of 1841 which killed seventy-five percent of the inhabitants. Now taking on new life and industry and becoming a popular resort.
- 1831—First cigar factory established at Key West by Wm. H. Wall.
- 1835—Seminole War commenced. Osceola imprisoned. General Thompson killed by Osceola. Dade "massacre."
- 1837—Battle of Okeechobee, the "hardest fought battle" of the Seminole War.
- 1837—Osceola captured while under flag of truce at St. Augustine.

- 1838—Osceola died at Fort Moultrie.
- 1840—Whites killed, and lighthouse at Cape Florida burned by so-called "Spanish Indians."
- 1842—Seminole War ended.
- 1842—Armed Occupation Act passed by Congress.
- 1845—Florida admitted to statehood.
- 1845—Artificial ice invented by Dr. John Gorrie of Apalachicola.
- 1847—War with Mexico. Lighthouse built at Cape Cavaneral.
- 1856—First State railway begun.
- 1858—Cessation of Indian hostilities.
- 1861—Florida secedes from the Union. Declared an independent state.
- 1862—Pensacola, Fernandina and St. Augustine evacuated by Confederate forces. Federal gunboats took Jacksonville.
- 1863—Jacksonville bombarded by Confederates.
- 1864—Battle at Olustree and Federals defeated.
- 1865—Jefferson Davis captured at Madison, Florida.
- 1870—Ku-Klux-Klan organized.
- 1879—Cargo of coconuts washed ashore from wrecked ship started the groves of palms at Palm Beach.
- 1886—Charleston earthquake rocked St. Augustine.
- 1886—Ponce de Leon and Alcazar Hotels built in St. Augustine by Henry M. Flagler. Heavy frosts did great damage to fruit orchards of Indian River district.
- 1888—Yellow fever epidemic swept Florida.
- 1889—Miami destroyed by fire.
- 1889—Phosphate beds discovered in Florida.
- 1895—Freeze, with temperature down to eight above zero.
- 1896—East Coast Railway extended to Miami.

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1898—Spanish War.

1901—Jacksonville destroyed by fire.

1905—First channel cut from Miami to the sea.

1906—World's automobile record broken at Pablo  
Beach by covering five miles in four minutes,  
fifty-five seconds.

1907—Bank panic.

1912—East Coast Railway extended by causeway to Key  
West.

1923—Florida land boom started.

1926—Miami swept by hurricane.

1927—Collapse of boom.

## PLACES OF INTEREST AND HISTORIC SITES

**ALACHUA**—County in which Gainesville is situated. One of richest in agriculture. Many natural wonders, such as underground streams, natural wells and the "Devil's Millhopper," a great bowl one hundred feet in diameter into which twenty streams flow constantly although the water level never increases or overflows. Some of highest land in Florida here (over 200 ft. above sea). Also valuable phosphate mines.

**AMELIA ISLAND**—Between Fernandina and mouth of St. Johns River. The scene of numerous battles. Occupied by McGregor under flags of Venezuela and Argentina in 1817. Resort of pirates.

**ANASTASIA (ISLAND)**—Connected with St. Augustine by a one-million-dollar bridge. Ruins of Spanish missions. Occupied by Oglethorpe in 1740.

**APALACHICOLA**—Monument to Dr. Gorrie, inventor of artificial ice. In 1814–16 renegade Negroes established a fort here. Destroyed by U. S. troops in 1816 and over 275 Negroes killed.

**BARKER'S BLUFF**—Scene of Indian massacre in 1849.

**BARTOW**—Valuable phosphate mines are near here.

**BATTEN ISLAND**—Thirty miles from Fernandina. Scene of De Gourgues' defeat of the Spanish forces in 1576.

**BOCA RATON**—The famous and palatial Boca Raton Club is situated here.

**CAPE FLORIDA**—Lighthouse attacked and keeper killed by Indians, 1836.

**CARYSFOOT REEF**—Florida Keys. In 1715 fourteen Span-



ish galleons were wrecked near here with vast treasure. Over half a million dollars recovered by salvagers in 1716.

**CAUSEWAY**—One of the wonders of the world. Over 125 miles in length spanning the ocean from key to key from the mainland to Key West and supporting the railway.

**CITY OF PALMS**—Nickname for Fort Myers.

**CUMBERLAND ISLAND**—Opposite Fernandina. Scene of British landing for attack on U. S. forces in Georgia, 1815. Finding peace had been declared the English withdrew.

**DADE MONUMENT**—Near Busnell in Sumpter County. Marks the scene of the "Dade Massacre" during Seminole War in 1835.

**DAYTONA (AND BEACH)**—Famed as a bathing beach, and, with Ormond Beach, as an automobile speedway where all world's records are made.

**DE LAND**—Famous for its fishing and hunting facilities.

**EVERGLADES (THE)**—The vast area of semi-flooded and flooded land with an area of over 5000 square miles in the interior of southern Florida. Now partly drained and converted into rich farm land. Traversed in many places by motor highways and excellent roads, notably about Lake Okeechobee and the Tamiami Trail. The majority of the surviving Seminole Indians dwell in the heart of the Everglades. In the "big cypress" district are trees only equaled by the "Big Trees" of California.

**FERNANDINA**—Famous for various important historical events. Founded in 1680. Taken by East Florida Republic in 1813. Made a free port in 1808. Famous haunt of pirates. Now an important fish-

ing center.

FORT JEFFERSON—(See Dry Tortugas).

FORT KING—Near Ocala and Silver Springs. It was here that General Thompson was assassinated by Osceola in 1835. Near here the famous "Dade Massacre" took place the same year. Monument to the battle.

FORT LAUDERDALE—Scene of the final "battle" of the Seminole war. A number of the Indians dwell on and about the government reservation here. Fort Lauderdale is a busy port with a harbor (Port Everglades) large and deep enough to accommodate the largest liners. Many steamships enter the port.

FORT PIERCE—During the Indian troubles this was the "dead line" beyond which no Indians could pass. Remains of walls still visible. Remains of prehistoric animals, mastodons, etc., were unearthed near here in dredging a ship channel. Also several ancient anchors and cannon now to be seen in the public square.

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH—A spring so-called on the outskirts of St. Augustine.

GAINESVILLE—Seat of University of Florida.

GASPARILLA ISLAND—At Charlotte Harbor south of Tampa Bay. Here, in 1800-01, the famous pirate, José Gaspar or Gasparilla, also known as Cœur de Leon, had his headquarters and fort and dwelt in regal style, calling himself "King of the Pirates."

INDIAN CAMPS—At Fort Lauderdale and near Miami.

INDIAN KEY—Government station destroyed and occupants killed by Indians, 1840.

INDIAN MOUNDS—At various places, notably New Smyrna

(covering ruins of the Turnbull Colony buildings) Everglades, La Belle, west of Palm Beach, etc.

**INDIAN RESERVATIONS**—At Fort Lauderdale, near Lake Okeechobee, and at Big Cypress in the Everglades.

**INDIAN RIVER**—An estuary or lagoon on Florida's east coast. A favorite winter resort and center of citrus fruit industry. The finest Florida oranges, grapefruit, etc., are grown here.

**JACKSONVILLE**—Formerly Cowfordia. Trading post established in 1816. Site of Ribault's and Laudonnière's Huguenot colonies, 1562-65. Also many engagements during the Civil War, border wars, War of 1812, etc. Destroyed by fire in 1901.

**JAX**—Nickname for Jacksonville.

**KEY WEST**—Called Cayo de Huesos by the Spaniards who found many skulls and skeletons on the key. The name Key West is a corruption of the Spanish name. Most southerly city in United States, one hundred and twenty-five miles from the mainland and less than one hundred miles from Havana. Formerly an important naval base. First transoceanic air service was between Key West and Havana. Largely inhabited by Cubans and Bahamans (Conchs). Now being rehabilitated by U. S. Government. Terminus of the East Coast Railway. Sponging, turtling and fishing port. Over four million pounds of fish shipped annually. Scene of many historic events.

**LAKE OKEECHOBEE**—The largest body of water in Florida. Situated almost due west of West Palm Beach and reached by a good automobile road which encircles the lake. Many prosperous farms

about the lake, although heavy rains flood the territory and cause enormous damages annually. During the hurricane of 1926 over five hundred persons lost their lives through the flood about the lake. About fifty miles across, but extremely shallow.

**LAKE WORTH (CITY)**—The “Wonder City” so called. A small town six miles south of Palm Beach on Lake Worth. A popular resort for the better class of winter visitors. The Gulf Stream flows nearer the coast here than at any other point in the United States.

**LAKE WORTH (LAKE)**—An estuary or lagoon about twenty-five miles in length and separating Palm Beach and West Palm Beach.

**MAGIC CITY**—Nickname for Miami.

**MARIANNA**—Near here a party of Indians hid under a natural bridge while the troops rode overhead.

**MATANZAS (AND INLET)**—Eighteen miles south of St. Augustine. First landfall of Ribault in 1562. Scene of massacre of Huguenots by Menendez in 1565. Old Spanish forts and ruins of missions here. Probably older than St. Augustine.

**MAY RIVER**—Original French name for St. Johns. So named because discovered on May Day, 1562.

**MIAMI**—A famous winter resort on Biscayne Bay. Formerly known as Fort Dallas, an army outpost. Scene of the greatest land boom ever known. Grew from a village of less than one hundred in 1896 to a city of over two hundred thousand in the space of thirty years.

**MOUNTAIN LAKE**—Site of the Bok Singing Tower, a memorial tower with carillon in a bird sanctuary established by Edw. Wm. Bok as a monument

to his grandparents. The total weight of carillon bells is over sixty tons.

**NEW SMYRNA**—Ten miles south of Daytona. Founded by Spaniards in 1565. Site of Turnbull's New Smyrna Colony, 1767. Named after Smyrna in Turkey, the birthplace of Turnbull's wife. Site of old Spanish missions. Large Indian mound under which are ruins of Turnbull's fort.

**OCALA**—It was near here that the famous "Dade Massacre" took place at beginning of Seminole War. Monument to the men who fell. At Fort King, Osceola assassinated General Thompson and his aide.

**OLUSTREE**—Battle monument commemorating battle of Civil War when Federals were defeated with loss of nearly 2000 men.

**ORLANDO**—Chief city of Central Florida. Rich agricultural center and popular winter resort.

**ORMOND**—See Daytona.

**PALM BEACH**—West Palm Beach is the city on Dixie and Federal Highways. Palm Beach is a winter resort on the island separating Lake Worth from the ocean. The most select resort in Florida, with magnificent homes of millionaires, socially elect, famous men of letters and art, etc. One of the show places of Florida. The innumerable coconut palms which abound here owe their origin to a vessel shipwrecked in 1879 with a cargo of nuts which were washed ashore.

**PALM CITY**—Nickname for Fort Myers.

**PANAMA CITY**—Settled in 1827. Destroyed by Federal fleet, 1863.

**PENSACOLA**—Founded by De Luna in 1559 but soon abandoned. First permanent settlement by De

Arriola in 1696. Captured by Andrew Jackson in 1814 and 1818. Capital of West Florida until 1822. Noted for having changed flags four times in one year, 1719. Probable landing place of De Soto.

PLACIDA—At northern end of Charlotte Harbor. Scene of Navarez landing in 1528.

ROCKLEDGE—Oldest winter resort on Florida east coast.

ST. AUGUSTINE—The oldest existing city in the United States. Settled by Menendez in 1565. Supposed to be the first landing place of Ponce de Leon, 1513. Many historic sites and buildings: Fort Marion, oldest house in United States, old slave market, old custom house built in 1574, etc. City taken and burned by Sir Francis Drake in 1586. Scene of many battles during various wars. Sacked by Davis the buccaneer in 1665.

ST. JOSEPH—Scene of Florida's first big land boom, 1829-30.

ST. MARKS—Terminus of Tallahassee-St. Marks railway, first in Florida, 1836. Scene of execution of Ambrister and Arbuthnot, British citizens convicted of inciting Indians, 1817. Captured by Andrew Jackson, 1818. Near here is the Natural Bridge where last battle of Civil War was fought in Florida.

ST. PETERSBURG—The "Sunshine City" noted for the fact that the sun shines 360 days in the year. Modern city and popular health and winter resort on Tampa Bay.

SARASOTA—The first golf course in the United States was laid out here.

SILVER SPRINGS—A remarkable pool with numerous springs gushing from the bottom and with crys-

tal clear water, multicolored rock formations, waving water plants, bright colored fish, etc. Five hundred million gallons of water flow into the pool daily.

SINGING TOWER—See Mountain Lake.

SPONGE FISHERIES—Most important are those at Tarpon Springs and about Tampa. Also at Key West.

SUNSHINE CITY—Nickname for St. Petersburg.

SUAWANEE RIVER—Famed for the song, "Way Down upon the Swanee River." Flows into the Gulf of Mexico near Cedar Keys. Near here in 1820, a schooner with five millions in coin paid by the U. S. to Spain went down.

TALLAHASSEE—State capital. Only state capital east of the Mississippi not captured by Federals during Civil War. Tomb of Prince Murat and wife. State College for Women, State Museum, College for Negroes and other public institutions.

TAMIAMI TRAIL—A remarkable motor road crossing the Everglades from Fort Myers to Miami. The road was constructed at enormous expense by blasting a canal and using the rock excavated as a roadbed.

TAMPA—An important city and port on Tampa Bay. Favorite and well-known winter resort. Many Cuban cigar factories. Shrimp and sponge fisheries.

TARPON SPRINGS—North of Tampa. Favorite resort for anglers. Large Greek Colony engaged in sponge fishery.

TORTUGAS (DRY)—A group of ten keys sixty miles west of Key West. Famed for Fort Jefferson, largest fortress in North America, built to control Gulf of Mexico but never used as fort. For many years

was a Federal prison, especially during the Civil War. Here Dr. Mudd was confined, accused of aiding Booth to escape after assassination of Lincoln. Neighboring keys are bird sanctuaries where thousands of terns and other sea birds breed. Site of Marine Biological Laboratory for several years.

**TWIN CITIES**—Nickname for Palm Beach and West Palm Beach.

**VERO BEACH**—A winter resort between Indian River and Fort Pierce. The "Jungle Gardens" near here are one of the "sights" of Florida.

**WONDER CITY**—A nickname for Lake Worth (city).

**YBOR CITY**—The Cuban and Spanish suburb of Tampa.



## WHAT TO SEE IN FLORIDA

- ANASTASIA ISLAND (across bay from St. Augustine)—  
Ruins of old Spanish missions.
- APALACHICOLA—Monument to Dr. Gorrie, inventor of  
artificial ice. Cedars of Lebanon.
- AVON PARK—Lookout tower.
- BARTOW—Phosphate mines.
- BLOUNTSTOWN—Dead Lake.
- BOCA RATON—Famous "mystery" club.
- CANAL POINT—Old Tracy House, hideout of the Ashley  
Gang of bandits.
- CLEARWATER—De Soto Springs (Espirito Santo).
- DAYTONA BEACH—Famous beach. Tomoka River.  
Boardwalk.
- DE FUNIAK SPRINGS—Seat of second Chautauqua in  
America.
- DELAND—Wonder Springs. Blue Springs. Ponce de Leon  
Springs and old Spanish mill. Moss-draped live  
oaks.
- EUSTIS—Washington birthday festival.
- FERNANDINA—Shrimp fisheries. Ruins of old pirate forts.
- FORT KING (Busnell)—Dade "massacre" battlefield.  
Ruins of fort. Monument.
- FORT LAUDERDALE—Seminole Indian Reservation. Deep  
water harbor. Yacht basin.
- FORT PIERCE—Old "dead line" fence. Ancient guns and  
anchors from wrecks of pirate and other ships.
- GAINESVILLE—Underground rivers. Newman's Lake.  
Prairie Creek. Phosphate mines. Natural wells.  
Devil's Millhopper. Battle monuments.
- INDIAN RIVER—Citrus fruit orchards. Pecan groves.

JACKSONVILLE—St. Johns River. Alligator and ostrich farms.

KEY WEST—Overseas highway and railway causeway. Fish and sponge markets. Turtle crawls. Old forts. Monument to heroes of the *Maine*. Convent of Mary Immaculate with *Maine* relics and flag. Lighthouse. Naval Station. Aquarium. Farthest south house and church. Old houses. Houses brought from Bahamas. Trained fish at Raoul's place, etc.

LAKE CITY—Battle Monument.

LAKE WALES—Bok Singing Tower at Mountain Lake.

LAKE WORTH—Alligator and ostrich farms. Tropical nurseries. Nearest spot to Gulf Stream in United States.

MARIANNA—Battle Monument. Caves.

MATANZAS—Ancient Spanish fort.

MIAMI—Seminole village. Hialeah Park. Fronton. Cabarets. Alligator farms. Airport. Aquarium. University. Jai-Alai games.

MOUNTAIN LAKE—Bok Singing Tower.

NEW SMYRNA—Ruins of old mission and forts. Turtle Mound. Dude Ranch.

OCALA—Phosphate mines. Limestone quarries. Silver Springs. Blue Springs. Salt Springs.

OKEECHOBEE—Lake Okeechobee. Dude Ranch at Brighten Valley. Everglades.

OLUSTEE—Battlefield and monument.

ORMOND—Home of John D. Rockefeller. Speedway beach.

PALM BEACH—Homes of millionaires. Avenues of palms. Bradley's famous casino. Nearest point to Everglades. Canals.

PANAMA CITY—First Kraft pulp mill.

PENSACOLA—Fort San Carlos. Fort Barrancas. Plaza Ferdinand where five national flags have flown. Fort St. George. Fort San Bernardino.

QUINCY—Tobacco plantations. Fuller's earth mines.

ST. AUGUSTINE—Fort Marion. City gates. Slave market. Oldest house. Cathedral. Fountain of Youth. Old customs house. Oldest schoolhouse. La Leche Chapel. Old Spanish houses. Monuments. Million dollar bridge.

ST. JOSEPH—Monument to First Constitutional Convention.

ST. MARKS—Ruins of Negro fort. Battle Monuments.

ST. PETERSBURG—Longest bridge in world (Gandy Bridge). Recreation Pier.

SANDFORD—Zoological gardens. Parks.

SARASOTA—Ringling Art Museum. Oldest golf course in United States. Ringling Brothers' Circus winter quarters.

SILVER SPRINGS—Great Cavern 65 ft. in length and 12 ft. in height discharging 550 million gallons of water each day. The largest spring in the world. Reception Hall, a spring cavern 40 ft. in diameter and depth. The Bridal Chamber, 80 ft. in depth, scene of the legend of the spring (see Chapter VI). Devil's Kitchen with boiling springs and underwater geysers. Valley of a Thousand Geysers, where blue, green and black rocks give a marvelous color effect. Garden of Eden, Sunken Gardens, Indian Cave, scene of legend (Chapter VI). Volcanic Basin where gushing springs throw up masses of charcoal, ashes, shells, etc. Prehistoric skeletons of mammoths etc.

TALLAHASSEE—Museum. Skeleton of mammoth from

Wakulla. Tomb of Prince Murat. Battlefield of Natural Bridge.

TAMPA—De Soto Oak. Gasparilla Festival. Cigar Factories. Ybor City (Cuban quarter). Marine speedway. Canals. Gondolas. Gandy Bridge (Longest in world).

TARPON SPRINGS—Sponge fisheries. Greek quarter. Blessing of waters. Paintings by Inness in Church of the Good Shepherd.

TORTUGAS (DRY)—Fort Jefferson. Bird sanctuaries.

VERO BEACH—McKee Jungle Gardens. Pineapple and banana farms.

WAKULLA—Wakulla Spring.

WHITE SPRINGS—Famous mineral springs.

WINTER HAVEN—Orange Festival.

## FLORIDA CAN TRUTHFULLY CLAIM:—

To be the first portion of North America discovered by the Spaniards.

To be the first portion of the United States settled by Europeans.

To possess the oldest existing city in the United States.

To have been under more flags than any other state in the Union; ten in all: Spain, France, England, Mexico, United States, Confederate States, Republic of East Florida, Republic of West Florida, Venezuela and the Argentine.

To be the only state where a pirate has ruled like a king.

To have the most southerly city in the United States.

To produce the finest citrus fruits.

To have the only capital south of Mason and Dixon's Line and east of the Mississippi which never fell into Federal hands during the Civil War.

To have the largest sponge fishery in the world.

To possess the largest lake south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi.

To be the only state with Everglades.

To have had the greatest land boom in the world.

To have the longest ocean causeway in the world.

To have the only overseas motor highway in the world.

To have the longest stretch of beaches in America.

To have the finest ocean beach speedway.

To have the only city south of the Mason and Dixon Line which remained under the Union flag throughout the Civil War.

To have had the longest war in which the United States

- ever engaged.
- To have had the most expensive war in proportion to the results obtained, the number of men involved and the losses sustained.
- To have had the only fortified renegade Negro city.
- To have the only Indian tribe which has never signed a treaty of peace with the United States and has never been conquered.
- To have had the third railway in the United States.
- To have the longest bridge in the world.
- That more "Havana" cigars are manufactured in Florida than anywhere else, including Cuba.
- To have been the home of the last of the Gulf pirates.
- To have been the only portion of North America attacked by Sir Francis Drake.
- That the process of making artificial ice on a commercial scale was invented by a Floridian in Florida.
- To be the only state which declared itself an independent and sovereign nation.
- That the first Jesuit Martyr in North America was killed by Indians in Florida.
- That the first National Good Roads Congress was held in the state.
- To have had the first transoceanic airmail service.
- That in one of its clubs men play for the highest stakes in the world.
- That more millionaires have winter homes in Florida than in any other locality.
- That Florida has the most popular winter resorts in America.
- That with the exception of the big trees of California and the Pacific Northwest, Florida has the largest trees in North America.
- That more world's automobile speed records have been

broken in Florida than in any other place.

That more big tarpon are taken in Florida waters than anywhere else.

That a greater number and variety of palm trees grow in Florida than in any other portion of North America.

To be the only state where there are wild flamingoes.

That the first golf course in the United States was in Florida.

To be the only state in the Union where two independent republics and a European colony were in existence at the same time.

To have had the first colony of French Huguenots in America.

To have changed hands more frequently than any other state.

To have been the only state where a private individual declared himself the ruling king of an independent nation.

To possess the largest and most remarkable fortress-prison in North America.

To have been the scene of the greatest miscarriage of justice in the history of the United States.

## INDIAN NAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS

- AIEK CHEE—Good medicine. Also Doctor.  
ALACHUA—A water hole. Literally a water jug.  
APALACHEE—Foreign (enemy) people.  
APALACHICOLA—Place of the enemy people.  
CHATTAHOOCHEE—Place of carved stone.  
COOACOOCHEE—Wild cat.  
HOLAWAHGUS—Retreat.  
HOMOSASSA—Where there are pepper trees.  
HYALEPUS—Hurry up.  
HYPOLUXO—Long Water (the Indian name for Lake Worth).  
ISTACHATTA—The red people.  
MIAMI (properly Me-ay-me)—Sweet (fresh) water.  
MUSKOGEE—Swamp people, Creek Indians.  
OCTAHATCHEE—River with sand bars.  
OKEECHOBEE—Big lake.  
OKLAWAHHA—Crooked river.  
OSCEOLA—Black water warrior.  
PAYHAIKEE—The Everglades.  
PENSACOLA—Place of the (bearded) white men.  
SEMINOLE (Sem-ay-no-lay)—The runaway people.  
SUAWAUNEE—Long crooked river.  
TAEKENOOGANEE—Wedding dance.  
TALLAHASSEE—The old place (town).  
WACASASSEE—Place where cattle graze.  
WAILAKA—Tidal waters (Indian name of St. Johns River).  
YAMASSEE—Woods people.





